Barcode : 99999990316209
Title - The Spirit Of Indian Philosophy
Author - Maitra,S.K.
Language - english
Pages - 286
Publication Year - 0
Barcode EAN.UCC-13
9 999999 031620

ERRATA

Page 9 line 25	*for* Buddhism,	*read* the Buddhists
Page 28 lines 2-3	*for* Pravāhana Jaivali	*read* Pravāhana Jaibali
Page 65 line 1	*for* p 379	*read* 2nd edn p 333
Page 72 line 6	*for* Krishna	*read* Kṛṣṇa
Page 76 line 14	*for* Krishna	*read* Kṛṣṇa
Page 79 line 4	*for* enjoying	*read* enjoining
Page 87 line 2	*for* सशय	*read* संशय
Page 94 line 8	*for* pp 258 59	*read* 2nd edn p 228
Page 96 line 9	*for* p 313	*read* 2nd edn p 276
Page 97 line 2	*for* Krishna	*read* Kṛṣṇa
Page 119 line 1	*for* तमाधिना	*read* समाधिना
Page 119 line 4	*for* Brahmabhūtya	*read* Brahmabhuya
Page 146 line 12	*for* xvii 2	*read* xviii 2
Page 149 line 16	*for* article	*read* essay
Page 153 line 19	*for* good	*read* good deal
Page 166 lines 17 18	*for* vividha ca pṛthak ceṣṭa	*read* vividhāśca pṛthak ceṣṭaḥ
Page 178 line 20	*for* second	*read* first
Page 181 line 18	*for* अन्वत्रा'यात्	*read* अन्यत्रा।स्मात्
Page 181 line 20	*for* यत्त	*read* यत्तत्
Page 185 line 1	*for* not break	*read* break
Page 187 line 12	*for* second and third	*read* third and fourth
Page 198 line 3	*for* verse	*read* verse (1 3 2)

Page 200 line 21	*for* Ayakta	*read* Avyakta
Page 203 last line	*for* Kaṭopaniṣad	*read* Kathopanisad
Page 211 line 25	*for* खल्विपद्	*read* खल्विद्
Page 219 last line	*for* article	*read* essay
Page 226 lines 5-6	*for* quoted just above	*read* quoted above
Page 251 line 25	*for* Hināyāna	*read* Hīnayāna
Page 251 lines 17-18	*for* hetupratyayapekṣā bhāvanāmutpādah	*read* hetupratyāpekṣo bhāvānām utpādah.
Page 257 line 22 of the footnote.	*for* Maitrī	*read* Maitri

PREFACE

The eight essays contained in this book were originally published as separate articles in different journals One of these also appeared in a commemoration volume The first essay, the subject matter of which forms the title of this book, contains the gist of a lecture delivered at the Allahabad University in the Moti Lal Nehru series of lectures under the auspices of the 'Moderns' Club, Allahabad University Although written at different times and on different topics, the essays will, I hope, be found to exhibit a fundamental unity of thought which justifies their inclusion in a book bearing the title, "The Spirit of Indian Philosophy" It is inevitable that there should be some repetition in a book of this kind I have also made no serious attempt to avoid it, because that would have destroyed the structural unity of the individual essays Moreover, repetitions of essential principles in different contexts have a value for a book like this which claims to exhibit the spirit of Indian Philosophy The book does not pretend to deal with all currents of Indian thought Nor is it in any sense a history of Indian philosophy If it succeeds in giving the reader

a general idea of the spirit which has animated Indian philosophical thought down the ages, I shall feel that my labours have not been in vain

I take this opportunity of expressing my best thanks to the editors of "Prabuddha Bharata" and "The Vedanta Kesari" for kindly permitting me to have the articles which were published in their magazines printed in a book form. I also thank the Editorial Committee of the Professor K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar Commemoration Volume for similar permission given to me in respect of the paper contributed to their volume. I have indicated in a footnote appended to every essay the name of the journal or book (as the case may be) in which it appeared originally.

Quarters No. D/8,
Benares Hindu University,
The 9th June, 1947.

S. K. Maitra

CONTENTS

		Page
1	The Spirit of Indian Philosophy ..	1
2	The Cosmic Significance of Karma in the Bhagavadgītā	36
3	The Idea of Conflict in the Bhagavadgītā	68
4	The Gītā's Conception of Freedom ..	105
5	The Sādhanā of the Bhagavadgītā ..	130
6	The Philosophy of the Kathopanisad	175
7	The Buddhist Conception of the Absolute	235
8	Self-effort or Grace?	256
	Index	273

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY*

I

Indian philosophy, in spite of the various forms which it assumed in different ages, has got its distinctive note, which we may call its spirit, which clearly distinguishes it from Western philosophy It may seem at first sight strange that philosophy, which Hegel defines as the Idea returning to itself, should have any peculiar local feature developed in particular countries or localities, for does not the very idea of any local feature militate against the conception of philosophy as the expression of the universal or the Absolute? But philosophy is the expression of the Absolute in *man*, and the nature of man and his fundamental needs in different countries must necessarily affect the expression of the Absolute in him In fact, the Universal, from Hegel's point of view, must

*This is the gist of a lecture delivered by the author at the 'Moderns' Club, Allahabad University, in the Motilal Nehru series of lectures on the 19th January, 1946, and published in the "Prabuddha Bharata," July, 1946

maintain a close and continuous contact with the particular media through which it has to express itself, for has he not taught us that the Universal should always be looked upon as a Concrete Universal and not as a mere Abstract Universal which is totally indifferent to the nature of the particulars?

We are justified, therefore, in speaking of the spirit of Indian philosophy, as we are justified in speaking of the spirit of Indian poetry or Indian music In fact, every nation has got its distinctive philosophy as it has got its distinctive literature and art This, far from being inconsistent with the universal nature of philosophy or art, is rather a consequence of it For a true universal shows itself as a universal only so far as it exhibits itself in its differences These differences, therefore, far from contradicting the presence of the universal are rather essential to the existence of the universal

Be that as it may, Indian philosophy has its characteristic note, which we may call its spirit If we are to express in the briefest possible terms what this spirit is, we may say that it is the quest for values Yes, that is the characteristic of Indian philosophy it is

the search for values, for what our sages used to call Puruṣārthas. Philosophy, therefore, in our country is both theoretical and practical. As a search it is theoretical; as a search for what is of greatest value, it is practical. In fact, the distinction of theoretical and practical is unknown in Indian philosophy: it is a purely Western product. Philosophy for us is Mokṣa-śāstra, the science of salvation. And *salvation represents the highest aim of our* practical life. It is the highest value, and the object of philosophy is to give the knowledge that will lead to it. The famous saying of Maitreyi, "येनाहं नामृता स्याम् किमहं तेन कुर्याम्," gives the key-note of Indian philosophy. Tagore has pointed out, in his inimitable manner, the significance of the fact that this great utterance came from the mouth of a woman. He has shown that it represents that aspect of reality which the woman symbolizes, that aspect which cannot be grasped with the help of logic but which can only be approached through the heart. It is the same aspect which Goethe calls the 'eternal feminine,' and which Oswald Spengler looks upon as the moving principle of history. The latter, for example, has gone so far as to say, 'Man *makes* history, but woman *is* history.'

It is what the Germans call *Schicksal*, the creative force which shapes the destiny of the world

It represents, in other words, the standpoint that Reality is Value Philosophy, from this standpoint, is not merely the knowledge of a collection of facts, but it is the knowledge of values, in particular, it is the knowledge of the supreme value, which is salvation When Nārada came to Sanatkumāra for instruction, he had already learnt all the sciences that had been cultivated in his time The list of sciences that he had studied is a very formidable one It is much more comprehensive than the list of subjects taught in any of our universities at the present day It included, for example, not only the Rg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, the Atharva Veda, history, grammar, the science of the worship of the manes, mathematics, logic, politics, but also such occult sciences as astrology and demonology, and such arts as snake charming, music, and the fine arts But all this knowledge of so many sciences and arts Sanatkumāra had no hesitation in proclaiming to be mere knowledge of words Not only so, but Nārada too had no illusions about himself He also knew that he had merely studied words Sanatkumāra,

therefore, wanted to impart to him the knowledge of values which would take him to the other shore, that is, the shore beyond darkness.

The essential knowledge, therefore, is the knowledge of values and not the knowledge of facts. And the object of philosophy is to impart this knowledge. This is the spirit that runs through the whole of Indian philosophy, and not merely through what are known as *the orthodox systems of philosophy*. Even what are known as the heterodox systems, such as Buddhism and Jainism, exhibit the same spirit, the same regard for values and the same contempt for what are merely facts. There is no difference between the orthodox and the heterodox systems on this point. They have their differences no doubt, the chief of which is their respective attitudes towards the Vedas and the Upanisads. While the orthodox systems regard these as authoritative, the heterodox systems do not do so. But on the question of the aim of philosophy, they are all united. They all look upon salvation as the ultimate aim of philosophy, though about the meaning of salvation they differ very much from one another.

When philosophy is conceived in this way,

the distinction between theory and practice breaks down. All philosophy is practical, because it has a definite object, namely, the realization of the supreme value, which is nothing else than salvation. It is the West that has clung to the distinction between theory and practice and has characterized philosophy as a purely theoretical discipline. This has made philosophy lose contact in the West with the vital currents of life and has reduced it more or less either to logomachy or to logic-chopping, as we see, for instance, in logical positivism which is so much in vogue today in England.

We may put this characteristic difference between the Indian and the Western view of philosophy also in the following way: Philosophy is no doubt love of knowledge (from *philos*—love, and *sophia*—knowledge), but the knowledge that philosophy cares for is not the knowledge of facts but the knowledge of values, especially, the supreme value, namely, salvation. The characteristic of true knowledge, as Nārada puts it in the story of his instruction at the hands of Sanatkumāra, already alluded to, is that it removes definitely all sorrow (तरति शोकमात्मवित्). The Sāṃkhya puts it as the complete cessation (अत्यन्तनिवृत्ति) of all sorrow.

This difference is really the difference between the view of Reality as Value and the view of it as Existence If Reality is conceived as Existence, there is bound to be a cleavage between theory and practice The teleological aspect of the universe remains totally unconnected with the existential aspect This is what has happened in Western philosophy Except for brief periods, as, for instance, in the heyday of Greek philosophy, in the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, Western philosophy has separated the existential from the teleological aspect of the universe The result has been a dualism of Existence and Value which has marred practically the whole history of European philosophy So deeply ingrained is this dualism that *even* in those systems which profess to be philosophies of Value, as, for instance in the systems of Munsterberg, Rickert, and Windelband, Value and Existence fall completely apart, The matter is further complicated by these systems identifying Reality with Existence, with the result that Value comes to be regarded as something unreal Can anything be more absurd than this? Those systems which profess to swear by Value—it is precisely these that

have ended by declaring Value to be unreal Can inconsistency go further than this?

Indian philosophy looks upon Reality as Value, and, consequently, the distinction between Value and Reality does not occur in it as it does in Western philosophy There are other consequences which follow Philosophy becomes all-embracing, touching not merely that aspect of our life which is called logical and which deals merely with the existential side of things, but also other aspects of our life which we call values It gains thus immeasurably in dignity and importance It becomes, in fact, as the Bhagavad Gitā puts it, an Adhyatma-vidyā or science of the Spirit.

Along with the emphasis upon values, there goes also in Indian philosophy the stress laid upon a direct intuition of reality Philosophy is Darśana, a vision of truth, and not merely an intellectual grasp of it But although philosophy is called Darśana, this does not mean that it eschews reason This is one characteristic difference between Indian philosophy and Western philosophy The West has gone wholly either for intuition or for reason When it accepted the standpoint of intuition, as in the Middle Ages, it banned reason entirely

When, as in the modern age, it has given prominence to reason, it shows contempt for intuition. In our country, however, philosophy has a different tale to tell. There has never been a conflict between intuition and reason, but philosophy has always given its due place to each of them. Śankara, who is supposed to be a very staunch advocate of intuition, emphatically asserts that in the case of knowledge which is accessible to the senses, the evidence of intuition, as recorded in the scripture, is of no avail. Even a thousand scriptual texts will not prove that fire is cold. It is only in the case of those truths which are not accessible to the senses that the evidence of the scripture is to be sought. Such a truth is the nature of the Ultimate Reality, and here guidance is to be sought in the revelation of the scripture. But for truths accessible to the senses, the evidence of the senses, aided by reason, will be the proper way of acquiring knowledge. Śankara himself used reason with great effect in criticising the positions of the other systems, such as the Śamkhya or Buddhism. At the other extreme, in the case of Buddhism, who have the designation of Pramana-patavah or experts in reasoning, we find that there also, exclusive

adherence is not given to only one way of approaching truth, but both intuition and reason are employed for obtaining the knowledge of truth The nature of the Buddha or Nirvana was never sought to be obtained by even the most extreme advocates of reason with the help of Tarka or reasoning

There is practical unanimity, therefore, among the different schools of Indian philosophy in looking upon the nature of the Ultimate Reality as that which is revealed by direct intuition, and that is why philosophy is called Darśana When philosophy is called Darśana, its intimate relationship with religion becomes at once apparent It shows that so far as the source of the knowledge of truth is concerned, it is the same for both philosophy and religion The starting-point of both is the same, namely, direct, immediate knowledge of truth But while philosophy seeks to discover the implications of this truth, religion is content with the mere contemplation of it Philosophy wants to build a whole structure upon the foundation of this knowledge, showing how the different kinds of our experience are related to this fundamental revelation Religion is not at all interested in this, its sole concern being with personal realization In fact,

in our country the attitude of religion is throughout personal, while that of philosophy is impersonal. While I say this, I do not forget that philosophy in our country has also a great practical object, *namely*, *personal salvation*. But it achieves this object *impersonally*. It is by shutting out completely all personal considerations that philosophy succeeds in its mission. It is indeed a paradox that it is only by becoming impersonal that philosophy succeeds in achieving our greatest personal end. But this only proves that the personal and the impersonal ultimately meet in the Highest Value.

In the West things are different. Religion there usurps most of the functions of philosophy. It pretends to be as objective and impersonal as the latter. It sets out to give, not inner realization, but creeds and dogmas which have no relation to a man's personal realization. These dogmas and creeds, claiming to possess universal validity, must, of course, show their credentials to philosophy, and if they are not found satisfactory, philosophy has no hesitation in rejecting them. This is the origin of the quarrel between religion and philosophy. In the Middle Ages, when religion had power and authority and philosophy none, it was philosophy

which suffered on account of this conflict Now religion has lost its former power and authority, but philosophy has not benefited much by it, for there has appeared on the scene a third power, namely, science, which dominates both philosophy and religion

In striking contrast to the West, our country has always been able to maintain a very friendly relationship between religion and philosophy This has been due to the fact that religion has sought the guidance of philosophy in the choice of the values which it seeks to realize The values which philosophy has pronounced to be the highest are precisely those which religion in our country has assiduously cultivated In the West, on the contrary, many of the values which philosophy has looked upon as most essential, have been cried down by religion, and *vice versa* While European philosophy has always esteemed very highly the value of freedom, religion in the West has looked down upon it So again, authority, which is so highly valued by religion in the West, is treated by Western philosophy as a very low value, if not altogether relegated to the domain of disvalues

It is often said that Indian philosophy is pessimistic Let us try to understand what

is meant by this Is it pessimism to say that the world contains sorrow, that our life is not wholly a bed of roses, that even our greatest pleasures are tainted with an admixture of pain? In that case, philosophy must frankly be pessimistic, for it cannot hide the misery, the sorrow, the pain that undoubtedly is there all around us Nor is it a charge which can be levelled against philosophy alone Literature and art will also come under it, for has not an English poet said, 'Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought'? In fact, if this is the test of pessimism, then there is hardly any poet or any philosopher, or for the matter of that, any politician, who is not a pessimist

But I venture to say that, even judged by this test, Indian philosophy cannot, as a whole, be called pessimistic The famous verse of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

> " न पश्यो मृत्युं पश्यति न रोगं नोत दुःखताम् ।
> सर्वं ह पश्यः पश्यति सर्वमाप्नोति सर्वशः " ॥

'The seer does not see death nor disease nor sorrow He sees all, and seeing all, he attains all in all ways'—explains very clearly the attitude of our ancient sages For them there was no death, no disease, no sorrow That we see death,

disease, and sorrow all round us is due to our defective vision In the same strain speaks also another passage of the same Upanisad "भूमैव सुख नाल्पे सुखमस्ति" 'Pleasure is in the whole, there is no pleasure in the fragmentary' It is because you cannot grasp the whole and your vision is limited to the finite and the particular, that you see misery and pain and death Remove this spiritual myopia by the infusion of true knowledge, and your sense of misery and sorrow will disappear

This was the general standpoint of the Upanisads on the question of evil There was a departure, however, from this standpoint when we come to the period when Indian thought became crystallized into definite systems of philosophy The buoyant optimism of the earlier age which refused to acknowledge the presence of evil, now gave rise to a more realistic attitude which admitted the presence of evil but refused to look upon it as inescapable Evil was there, it would admit, but man had the power to escape it So far as man was concerned, evil was not a permanent thing, for he could escape it if he sincerely desired to do so and adopted the right method

Another thing we also notice at this stage All the evils were now reduced to a fundamental

evil, which we may call a metaphysical evil, that is to say, to finitude with its characteristics, disharmony, motion, unrest. This general attitude is clearly indicated in the fifteenth verse of the second chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras*, which runs as follows:

" परिणामतापसंस्कारदुःखैर्गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः " ॥

'By reason of the pains of change, anxiety, and habituation, and on account of the contrariety of the Gunas, everything is pain for the discriminating.' Here it is to be observed that the characteristics mentioned of pain, namely, change, habituation, contrariety of the Guṇas, are all metaphysical. Pain, as physical evil, is here transformed into a generalized evil, appertaining to the metaphysical nature of the world. The same is true of the characterization of pain in *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, 55:

" तत्र जरामरणकृतं दुःखमाप्नोति चेतनः पुरुषः ।
लिङ्गस्याविनिवृत्तेस्तस्मात् दुःखं स्वभावेन " ॥

Here the cause of pain that is given, namely, लिङ्गस्याविनिवृत्ति, want of discrimination between the subtle body and the soul, is a purely metaphysical one. To my mind the characterization of pain in the *Yoga Sūtras*, as well as in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, indicates a transformation of it into

something more universal which embraces pain and other kinds of evil But pain as pain is not completely lost in the transformation, although it appears as part of a more universal evil

One thing also it is important to observe here In the Sutra of Patanjali which we have quoted above, it is stated that to the discriminating man everything is pain The words 'the discriminating man' are in my view, rather important, for they show that the evil spoken of in the Sutra is not of a physical nature but is something very subtle, which only the discriminating can understand In Vyasa's commentary on this Sutra the significance of these words is clearly shown Vyasa states, for example, that the Yogin acquires very great sensitiveness to pain and he compares this sensitiveness to that of the eyeball Just as a thread of wool causes pain when it comes in contact with the eyeball but not when it touches other parts of the body, so the realization that all in this world is pain is so subtle that only the Yogin who has developed his powers of discrimination can have it This clearly shows that the pain is more of the nature of a metaphysical than of a physical evil

But nowhere, perhaps, in Indian philosophy has the question of evil been so thoroughly studied as *in the schools of Buddhism* Here, too, *the* purely physical evil is transformed into a metaphysical one. The elaborate chain of causes and effects which the doctrine known as Pratitya-samutpāda sets up, is perhaps the best example that exists anywhere in the history of philosophy of a *metaphysical explanation of pain.* In the process pain becomes merged in something more comprehensive

But what I would like to point out here is that although in all the systems of Indian philosophy there is an admission of the presence of evil, this admission is always coupled with the statement that *it is possible for man to get rid of evil*, and not only with a mere statement that it is so possible, but with expositions of the method by which escape from evil can be secured As Principal Jaideva Singh says[1], 'every system of Indian philosophy recognizes the hard fact of Duhkha and points a way out of it It gives the heartening message to man that it is open to him to re-

[1] *Vide* his paper on *The Concept of Duhkha in Indian Philosophy*, contributed to the *Ganganath* Jha Research Institute

gulate his life in such a way as to rise above Duhkha.'

Does all this show that the spirit of Indian philosophy is pessimistic? Is it a sign of pessimism to declare unequivocally that man has the power to escape evil completely, and not only to declare this but also to show how this is to be done? Let us see how we stand in this matter as compared with the Western philosopher. The Western philosopher resents very strongly any attempt to whittle down evil. Evil, according to him, is a permanent feature of the world and there can be no escape from it, except (as some declare) through God's grace Martineau, for instance, regards evil, especially in the form of moral evil, as a necessary consequence of human freedom, and therefore, as bound to continue so long as human freedom continues. And for human freedom to be lost is for him a greater calamity than the presence of evil He would far rather that evil should continue than that men should lapse into the condition of brutes, for without freedom, that would assuredly be their condition 'It is because He (God) is holy,' says Martineau, 'and cannot be content with an unmoral world where all the perfection is given and none is earned, that He refuses to render

guilt impossible and inward harmony mechanical.' In fact, his whole theory of morality rests upon the possibility of man's making an *improper* use of freedom. Prof. C. E. M. Joad, in like manner, looks upon evil as an ineradicable feature of the universe, with only this difference, that he believes it possible to escape it with the help of God's grace. Thus, in a passage of his book *God and Evil* (p. 236), he says: 'I have told in the third chapter how the new obtrusiveness of the fact of evil engendered the conviction that evil was a real and irreducible factor in the universe, and also how, paradoxically, the very fact of that conviction brought with it the felt need for a God to assist in the struggle to overcome evil. Now the admission of the reality of evil entails the view that this is a moral universe, in the sense that it is a universe in which conflict, the conflict between good and evil, is fundamental and presumably continuous.'

Such being the view of these Western philosophers, does it lie in their mouth to bring this charge of pessimism against Indian philosophy? We could, with far greater justice, have brought this charge against Western philosophers, for at least we can say that we have always shown a way in which evil can be overcome, whereas, according

to them, man can never, by his own efforts, overcome it.

II

There is another charge which is also brought against Indian philosophy. It is often said that Indian philosophy preaches asceticism, that it is the philosophy of refusal and not of acceptance of the world. It is true that in some of the schools, especially in those of Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism, it did develop this tendency. But this cannot be said to be the fundamental tendency of Indian philosophy or that it is essentially ascetic in its outlook. So far as its roots are concerned, it is certainly not ascetic. For they go back to the Upaniṣads, and the spirit of the Upaniṣads is certainly not in favour of asceticism. One need only think of the following verse of the Īśā *Upaniṣad* to be convinced of this:

" कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे " ॥

'Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man,' (Sri Aurobindo's translation). Other verses of the same Upaniṣad, especially those which proved

so baffling to generations of commentators of this Upaniṣad—I mean verses 9-11—have defined more clearly the attitude of this Upaniṣad towards work. These verses run as follows:

> " अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
> ततो भूय इव ते तमो यउ विद्याया रताः ॥९
> अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययाऽन्यदाहुरविद्यया ।
> इतिशुश्रुम धीराणा ये न स्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥१०
> विद्याञ्चाविद्याञ्च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
> अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते" ॥ ११

'Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone. (9). Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding. (10). He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.' (11) (Sri Aurobindo's translation).

Although these verses proved very puzzling to our scholars, yet their meaning it is not difficult to understand. The Upaniṣad clearly indicates here the danger of following the path of asceticism.

Its purpose is undoubtedly to guard mankind against this danger. It states in unmistakable terms that any attempt to escape the duties of a householder's life in the anxiety to make a short cut to salvation is doomed to failure As Sri Aurobindo has beautifully explained, the object of these verses is to show the mutual relationship of Vidyā, that is, knowledge of the Noumenal, and Avidyā or knowledge of the Phenomenal, and the necessity of giving a due place to both in any scheme of salvation. The knowledge of the world in its variety and multiplicity is Avidyā, while the knowledge of its fundamental unity in the Absolute is Vidyā. The significance of both these kinds of knowledge is thus indicated by Sri Aurobindo: 'All manifestation proceeds by the two terms Vidya and Avidya, the consciousness of the Unity and the consciousness of multiplicity. They are the two aspects of Maya, the formative self-conception of the Eternal. Unity is the eternal and fundamental fact without which all multiplicity would be unreal and an impossible illusion. The consciousness of Unity is, therefore, called Vidya, Knowledge. Multiplicity is the play or varied self-expression of the One, shifting in its terms, divisible in its view of itself, by force of which the One occupies many

centres of consciousness, inhabits many formations of energy in the universal movement. Multiplicity is implicit or explict in Unity. Without it Unity would be either a void of non-existence or a powerless, sterile limitation to the state of indiscriminate self-absorption or of blank repose.'

The verses stress the need of realizing the Divine both in its unity and its multiplicity. The realization of the Divine in multiplicity is the realization of it through our worldly life, through the infinite chain of duties and obligations which bind us to our fellows and to the universe. This is a necessary part of the realization of the Absolute. To ignore it, as some over-zealous devotees of the path of knowledge do, is a great mistake. The Upaniṣad is conscious of the existence of such devotees and, therefore, feels it its duty to give them a clear warning. At the same time it does assert that the knowledge of multiplicity is not the ultimate knowledge, and it states in the first line of the ninth verse that those who worship Avidyā i.e., who realize God in His multiplicity only, enter into blind darkness. It is probably because it finds a greater temptation on the part of men who aspire after salvation to straightaway realize God in His unity, without caring to realize Him through the infinite multiplicity

of the world, that it declares their condition to be even worse than that of those who try to realise God only through His infinite multiplicity.

Similarly, the next three verses of the *Isā Upaniṣad* (12-14) emphasize the importance of looking upon God both as Becoming and as non-Becoming. These three verses are the most difficult ones in this Upanisad, and what Sambhūti and Asambhūti mean is no doubt a matter of great controversy, but unless we take these words in the sense, respectively, of birth and non-birth, i.e., of Becoming and non-Becoming, as Sri Aurobindo has done, we do not get any sense out of them. These verses evidently stress the need of realizing God through birth or Becoming. They undoubtedly give a status to the world and are not consistent with the view which treats the world as illusory. When seen through the true vision of the seer (Kavi), birth or Becoming becomes charged with divinity. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, ' This Becoming is now governed by the true sight of the seer, and once this is done, Becoming is no longer inconsistent with Being, birth becomes a means and not an obstacle to the enjoyment of immortality by the Lord of this formal habitation. This is our proper course

and not to remain for ever in the chain of birth and death, nor to flee from birth into a pure non-Becoming' (*Isha Upanishad*, p 119)

The net result of these six verses of the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, along with the two opening verses of this Upaniṣad, is to check the tendency towards escapism and to give the world a reality-status, thereby effectively stopping the growth of the view which looks upon the world as an illusion This may be looked upon as the normal standpoint of the Upanisads, though variations from it, either in the direction of asceticism or in that of the doctrine of works, are sometimes met with, The most curious example is that of the *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, where texts applauding to the skies the life of Karma are followed immediately by others which prescribe the renunciation of action and adoption of mendicancy. A reconciliation of these contrasting attitudes is, however, made at the end of this Upanisad, where it is stated that it is only those who have gone throgh the drill of Karma properly that are entitled to receive Brahma Vidyā.

क्रियावन्त. श्रोत्रिया ब्रह्मनिष्ठा
स्वय जुह्वत एकर्षिं श्रद्धयन्त ।
तेषामेवैता ब्रह्मविद्या वदेत
शिरोव्रतं विधिवद्यैस्तु चीर्णम् ॥

(*Mund Up* 3 2 10).

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, from the order in which the boons are asked by Naciketas, it appears quite clear that the path of Karma is looked upon as a condition precedent to the knowledge of Brahman. Naciketas, for instance, first asks to be allowed to return to this world and be reconciled to his father who, in a fit of anger, sent him to Hades. His object, therefore, in his first boon is to maintain continuity between this life and the next, to realize that death is life and life is death and that there is no snapping of the chain when death causes a dissolution of the body. Reconciliation with his father is a part of the maintenance of this continuity, for with his father's wrath unappeased, return to the earth would have been impossible, and the chain would have snapped. The first boon, therefore, draws pointed attention to the eternity of the Karmic process, life succeeding death and death succeeding life in an ever recurrent movement. In the second boon Naciketas wants to know the secret of this world-process. This secret is the knowledge of Fire, the symbol of the cosmic movements. The Greek sage Heraclitus also looked upon fire as the symbol of change and movement. But in Indian philosophy fire is also the symbol of sacrifice, that is, of Karma. From the Vedic times

onwards fire has been intimately connected with the daily life of the householder. It is indispensably necessary for every Yajña. And because of its connection with Yajña we may call it the principle of Karma. Naciketas, in his second boon, really wants to know the fundamental principle of Karma.

It is only after he acquires this knowledge that he becomes fit to receive instruction in the nature of the soul. It is therefore in his third boon that he asks for this instruction. He could not have done it earlier. The knowledge of Karma is an essential preliminary condition for the attainment of the knowledge of the soul. The order of Naciketas' boons, therefore, demonstrates clearly that a man must go through the drill of Karma before he becomes fit to receive instruction in the knowledge of the soul, which is the same as the knowledge of Brahman.

In the earliest Upanishads, in the *Bṛhadaranyaka* and the *Chāndogya*, there is, if anything, a still closer connection between Brahma Vidyā and the householder's life. All the great Rajarshis and Brahmarshis mentioned in these Upanisads, who were the repositories of the knowledge of Brahman, were householders. Yājñavalkya, perhaps the greatest figure in these Upaniṣads,

was a householder with two wives Even more significant is the fact that kings, like Pravāhana Jaivali, Ajātaśatru, and Aśvapati Kaikeya, who had to manage the affairs of their States and also lead armies into the battle-field, figure as teachers of Brahma Vidyā. What better proof than this can there be that the householder's life was looked upon by these Upanisads not only as not inconsistent with the right to receive knowledge of Brahman, but was rather regarded as an essential condition for it?

I need not labour this point. It is quite clear that the spirit of the teaching of the Upanisads is against asceticism. But it is not until we come to the Bhagavad-Gītā that the whole question of the relation of Karma to spiritual life is fully elaborated. What is of even greater importance, a synthesis is effected between the life of Karma and the life of renunciation. This synthesis is perhaps the greatest achievement of our philosophy. It is effected with the help of the conception of Yoga. Yoga means union with God, and this union can be effected in various ways. It can be effected through Karma, it can be effected through Jñāna, it can be effected through Dhyāna, it can be effected through Bhakti. It can also be effected in other ways. In fact, each

of the eighteen chapters of the Gītā is called a a Yoga and shows the way in which union with God is to be achieved. But in whatever way the union is achieved, there are certain conditions that must be fulfilled. If it is through knowledge that a man wants to seek union with God, it is perfectly open to him to do so, but he must know that this path, if it is to lead to the desired goal, will have to be followed under certain conditions. So is it with Karma. These conditions, however, transform the original nature of the path. The Sāṃkhya or the path of knowledge that advocated renunciation of action is transformed into the Sāṃkhya Yoga that advocates action. Similarly, the Karma that was based upon desire is transformed into the Karma Yoga that rests upon complete annihilation of desire. It is thus that the paths of knowledge and action meet. They meet when they are respectively transformed into Sāṃkhya Yoga and Karma Yoga. The feature of Karma that made it repugnant to the advocates of renunciation, viz., the presence of desire, is removed in Karma Yoga which enjoins the performance of action in a spirit of absolute detachment or disinterestedness. So, too, when the advocates of the path of knowledge drop escapism, as they do in Sāṃkhya Yoga, there

is nothing to prevent them from joining hands with the followers of the path of Karma The Gītā in this way reconciles the seemingly most contradictory phases of our life, represented respectively by Jñāna, Karma, and Bhakti

This synthesis represents the high water-mark of Indian thought Unfortunately, however, it was lost in the subsequent development of our thought in the different schools The differences between knowledge and action and knowledge and Bhakti were enormously accentuated in these schools, with the result that each of them represented only one side of our spiritual life The great prestige of Advaita Vedānta gave undue prominence, to its standpoint of renunciation of action and made people forget that it was opposed to the spirit of Indian philosophy as represented by the Upanisads and the Bhagavad Gita No wonder, then, that European scholars have taken this attitude of Advaita Vedanta to be the typical attitude of Indian philosophy and have pronounced the spirit of Indian philosophy to be one of asceticism But, as we have pointed out above, there cannot be any greater mistake than this

I have been talking so long of the spirit of our philosophy as it has been in the past This

must not, however, be construed as meaning that in my view Indian philosophy exists only in the past. The reverse is the truth. I look upon Indian philosophy as eminently living. Not only so, but I protest against the excessive emphasis that is laid upon our past. Too much emphasis upon our past achievements belittles our present efforts. Unfortunately, this tendency to speak highly of our past glories and to be silent about our present efforts we notice not only among Europeans but also among many of our own countrymen. I do not mind very much what foreigners think about us, but I certainly do mind if our own countrymen are obsessed with the idea that because we had a glorious past, therefore we can afford to live upon it. One way in which this obsession has made its appearance is in the form of the complacent view, which is specially noticeable in the case of philosophy, that all that we need do at present is to elaborate one or other of the great systems that we had in the past. If worship of the past takes this form, then, far from being a stimulating influence for the growth of thought, it becomes one of its greatest obstacles.

This attitude, moreover, is extremely unjustified, in view of the great contribution to

world thought which our country has made in recent years. The great work which Raja Rammohan Roy did in reviving our ancient culture and bringing it into contact with Western thought, thus giving it a form in which it could become a tremendous force for the creation of a New India, has been continued by a succession of great leaders of thought. The problem of Raja Rammohan Roy was to give new life to a culture which had been dormant for several centuries. He solved this problem by reviving the ancient culture of the land and at the same time making as free a use as possible of Western thought which had just begun to percolate into this country. After the Raja's death our country became flooded with Western thought, with the result that there was a rapid loss of faith in our ancient culture among the educated classes. This was a most unfortunate development, and it was the lifework of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda to put a check to this and restore the balance that had been temporarily lost. But they did much more than this. They helped to create a new national consciousness which, proud of its own heritage, knew how to adjust itself to modern conditions.

Thanks to these great leaders, the spark which was kindled by Raja Rammohan Roy has grown into a wild fire, and Indian philosophy in recent years has contributed not a little to world thought. Sri Aurobindo, undoubtedly the greatest figure in the philosophical world today, has shaken philosophical thought to its very foundations in his great book *The Life Divine*, which is perhaps the greatest philosophical work that this century has produced. His strong affirmation of the reality of the world and of its progressive march to higher and higher levels and his faith in the great destiny of man give mankind that assurance about its future which it needs so badly at present. Above all, the vision that he gives us of the dawning of a Higher Consciousness which will transform the world and make it really a 'Kingdom of Heaven', is one of the grandest visions that have been vouchsafed to man. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Ahimsā, representing, as it does, the true spirit of our culture, reveals the infinite possibilities that are latent in it. In the hands of Mahatmaji the principle of Ahimsā is an instrument of enormous potency, capable of shaping and moulding the world and establishing peace and goodwill among men in a manner undreamt of before. He

has, in fact, demonstrated the power of Indian thought to create a world order infinitely more just and more durable than the present one. Tagore's conception of the essential unity of man with man and with the universe lays the philosophical foundation upon which to build a universal brotherhood of man But it does something far more than this: it shows how hollow all conceptions of universal brotherhood are, unless they are *rooted in the idea of the essential unity of man* with God. Here Tagore is true to the spirit of our philosophy which never believed in any unity between man and man which is not founded upon the realization of the unity between man and God Lokamanya Tilak, by his masterly exposition of the Gītā, has shown how the principle of Karma Yoga can furnish a philosophy of life which is in a position to give unfailing guidance in all the crises through which mankind may have to pass. Sir S. Radhakrishnan has brought the principles of Advaita philosophy into relation with the trends of modern thought. This has not only enabled him to act as one of the best cultural ambassadors of our country in the West, but what is of even greater importance, it has given him the power, which he has employed fearlessly, of pointing out the shortcomings of Western

civilization and culture. Dr. Bhagavan Das has revived the spirit of our socio-political philosophy, and in the light of this has attempted a reconstruction of our modern sociopolitical life. These are some of our leading creative thinkers of the present day; whose thought has travelled far beyond the borders of our country and who possess sufficient dynamism to change the course of world thought.

The spirit of Indian philosophy is not dead, but on the contrary, is extremely alive. The last two wars have shown the bankruptcy of Western thought. The world is, therefore, desperately in need of a new light and that light must come from India. It is only India, with her traditional superiority in the realm of pure thought, that can give the world the message for which it is waiting. But that she may do so, it is necessary that she should attain freedom, for it is only a free country that has got the right to give, and it is from a free country that the world will also receive any message. May India regain her legitimate position among the free nations of the world and may it be her proud privilege to give the world that emancipating message of which it is desparately in need today!

THE COSMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF KARMA IN THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ **

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

Bhagavad-Gītā VIII. 3.

This verse introduces a new conception of karma which did *not appear in the previous* chapters of the Bhagavad-Gītā. In those chapters karma was presented from the point of view of the individual's need for salvation or from the point of view of duty. The individual must perform karma if he is really to obtain salvation, for salvation is impossible through inaction. He must also do karma from a pure sense of duty and not from a desire for the fruits of karma. The teaching of the Gītā has been mainly on these lines in the previous chapters.

But now in the eighth chapter a new standpoint emerges. It is the cosmic standpoint of karma. Karma is now shown in its relation to the cosmic principles which govern the whole universe.

** Reprinted from the "Prabuddha Bharata," February 1959.

Indeed, from the seventh chapter onward, there is a gradual march towards the cosmic *standpoint which reaches its culmination in the* eleventh chapter which deals with the Visva-rupa or the cosmic form of God.

The Gītā's object here is to show that ethical questions cannot be solved without reference to the metaphysical question relating to the ultimate nature of God and His relation to the universe. In the previous chapters, although the metaphysical question of the nature of God was occasionally brought in, yet it was not made the central principle from which the ethical principles were deduced; it was rather introduced by way of illustrating some of the points raised in the discussion of the ethical problem.

The cosmic aspect of karma is not a new idea introduced by the Bhagavad-Gītā, but goes back, as the late Ramendra Sundar Trivedi showed, to the Ṛgveda. In the Purusa Sūkta, for instance, it is said:

"पुरुष एवेदं सर्व्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्यैशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ।
....यत्पुरुषेण हविषा देवा यज्ञमतन्वत ।
वसन्तो अस्यासीदाज्यं ग्रीष्म इध्मः शरद्धविः ॥
तं यज्ञं बर्हिषि प्रौक्षन्पुरुषं जातमग्रतः ।
तेन देवा अयजन्त साध्या ऋषयश्च ये

तस्मात् यज्ञात् सर्व्वहुतः ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।
छन्दांसि जज्ञिरे तस्माद्यजुस्तस्मादजायत ॥
...यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि
धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ।
ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्त
यत्र पूर्व्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ॥"

(*Rg.-Veda*, 10. 90. Verses 2-16):

" The Puruṣa was all that is and all that will be : ruling over immortality, he was all that grows by food . . . When the gods made sacrifice with the Purusa, for their offering, Spring was the butter for him, Summer was the fuel, Autumn the offering. They besprinkled the sacrifice on the Altar, the Puruṣa born in the beginning : the gods, the holy ones and the sages took him for their offering . . . From that sacrifice fully made, the Rgveda and the Sāmaveda were born : from it the Atharvaveda was born, from it the Yajurveda was born . . . With sacrifice the gods sacrificed, these were the first rites : then these great ones sought out heaven, where are the holy gods that were before them" (*Vide* Peterson's translation of the Puruṣa Sūkta as given in his *Hymns from the Ṛgveda*, Bombay Sanskrit Series).

The purport of these verses is that creation is a *yajña* of Puruṣa or God. The whole universe,

therefore, owes its origin to a *yajña* by God. From this, as the late Ramendra Sundar Trivedi so beautifully showed, a principle can be derived for ethics. The karma of human beings must partake of the nature of the first karma or *yajña* performed by God which ushered in this universe. That is to say, it must be a pure disinterested sacrifice of one's self. The words 'भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः' indicate this. The sacrifice (*visarga*) of God is not for any selfish object or purpose of His but solely for the purpose of creating the universe. This gives also the characteristic of all true karma. It must be a complete sacrifice of oneself without any mental reservation. There must be no thought of any benefit accruing to oneself either in this life or in the next, either in the present or in the future.

Morality, therefore, is only another illustration of the cosmic principle of disinterested sacrifice. "तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः" (Enjoy by giving yourself up) thus becomes a moral principle, because it is in accordance with the great principle of sacrifice which is the cause of the very existence of the universe.

The Bhagavad-Gītā does not look at life piecemeal. Hence it cannot rest content with giving moral instruction which does not go to

the very roots of things. Therefore it is bound to bring the moral into relation with the cosmic order. The knowledge of one's duty is not complete, according to the Bhagavad-Gītā, unless duty is brought into relation with the cosmic processes and with God as their supra-cosmic Source. Readers of Green's "Prolegomena to Ethics" will notice here how similar is Green's method to that of the Bhagavad-Gītā. Like the Gītā, Green also bases his ethical system upon metaphysics. The source of moral life, according to Green, is the Eternal Intelligence reproducing itself in human consciousness, just as, according to the Gītā, it is the Imperishable Brahman sacrificing Itself for the sake of the creation of beings.

The first *yajña* or karma was thus the sacrifice of the Eternal Puruṣa. As the late Ramendra Sundar Trivedi showed in his *Yajña-kathā*, the Hindu conception of karma always remained true to this idea of sacrifice as constituting its essence. According to this conception, duty means nothing else than loyalty to this fundamental principle of sacrifice which is responsible for there being a world at all. As the whole world owes its existence to *yajña*, the entire human life is to be looked upon as a perpetual *yajña*, and the

principle of morality can be nothing else than sacrifice.

In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* the whole of a man's life is described as a *yajña* :—

"पुरुषो वाव यज्ञस्तस्य यानि चतुर्विंशतिवर्षाणि तत्प्रातःसवनम्··· यानि चतुश्चत्वारिंशद्वर्षाणि तन्माध्यन्दिनं सवनं···अथ यानि अष्टाचत्वारिंशद्वर्षाणितृतीयसवनम्···

स यदशिशिषति यत्पिपासति, यन्न रमते ता अस्य दीक्षाः ॥ अथ यदश्नाति यत्पिबति यद्रमते तदुपसदैरेति ॥ अथ यद्धसति यज्जक्षति यन्मैथुनं चरति स्तुतशस्त्रैरेव तदेति ॥ अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहिंसा सत्यवचनमिति ता अस्य दक्षिणाः ॥ तस्मादाहुः सोष्यत्यसोष्टेति पुनरुत्पादनमेवास्य तन्मरणमेवास्यावभृथः ॥"

(*Vide* Adhyāya III. Khanda 16-17)

Duty or morality is thus not an isolated phenomenon. To understand it fully, one has to view it in the light of the eternal forces which make and unmake the universe. This is the cosmic significance of duty, and without understanding this, a true insight into the nature of morality is impossible.

The main purpose of the verse with which we have opened this article is to supply the necessary cosmic background of duty. The cosmic principles involved in duty are: (1) the absolutely imperishable Brahman (अक्षरं ब्रह्म) (2) Its nature as

अध्यात्म or spiritual, and (3) Its sacrifice for the creation of beings, which is called karma

The verse starts with the ultimate source of morality, which is nothing else than the imperishable Brahman It is also called the higher Unmanifested (अव्यक्त) and distinguished from the lower Unmanifested which is the Mūlaprakṛti of the Sāmkhya, the source of all natural processes. Above both these—the higher Unmanifested and the lower Unmanifested—there is the Supreme Spirit, called Purusottama, who is described in Verse 18 of the fifteenth chapter

यस्मात् क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

The late Lokamanya Tilak in his celebrated *Gīta-Rahasya*, while interpreting this verse, said that the Aksara mentioned here could not refer to Aksara Brahman but to Aksara-Prakṛti or Mūla-Prakṛti. But we would respectfully point out that the Aksara is distinctly mentioned as Purusa, which does not fit in well with the view that it means the imperishable Prakṛti He further said that Aksara Brahman and Purusottama are identical We are, however, inclined to think with Dr S N Dasgupta that Aksara Brahman is identical with the higher *avyakta* but is lower than Purusottama As Dr Dasgupta puts it, "It

seems very probable, therefore, that Brahman is identical with this higher *avyakta*. But though this higher *avyakta* is regarded as the highest essence of God, yet, together with the lower *avyakta* and the selves, it is upheld in the super-personality of God" (*Vide History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II., p. 476).

One difficulty in looking upon Purusottama as higher than Akṣara Brahman is that the Gītā calls the latter 'परमा गतिः', 'तद्धाम परमं मम'. But it should be remembered that that is the way in which the Gītā speaks of anything when its object is to exalt it. For instance, the words *guhyatama* and *parama* are so often used with regard to the instruction given to Arjuna in the different chapters, that the words really cannot be taken literally and only indicate the importance which the Gītā attaches to them. In the ninth chapter, for instance, the most secret (*guhyatama*) knowledge is said to be the knowledge of *rājavidyā* and *rājaguhya*. In the tenth chapter, again, the Supreme Word (परमं वचः) is said to be the knowledge of God as *aja*, *anâdi* and *lokamaheśvara*. So again, in the fifteenth chapter the knowledge of God as Puruṣottama is called *guhyatamam śâstram*. The same is the case with such words as परमा गतिः and परमं धाम ॥ They do not mean that

that to which these epithets are applied is really the absolutely highest, but only indicate that in the particular chapter in which they occur it is the highest principle discussed.

The highest principle of the Gītā is undoubtedly Purusottama, God conceived as a super-Person. Aksara Brahman is abstract in comparison with it, though not as abstract as the Vedantist's Brahman. Akṣara Brahman has sufficient concreteness to be the principle concerned with the creation of the universe and the establishment of Karma. But it has certainly not the concreteness and richness of Purusottama. It is not as Akṣara Brahman but as Puruṣottama that Lord Krishna says: "Relinquishing all *dharmas* take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not" (Chap. XVIII. 66).

And it is for this reason that it is possible for the Gītā to say that God is as much an object of knowledge as He is an object of devotion. A purely abstract Brahman is certainly not a fit object for *bhakti*. The God of the Gītā is undoubtedly a Person, but in order to indicate that He is a Person in a much higher sense than what we ordinarily call a person, He is called Puruṣottama or the Supreme Person. This is quite in keeping with the whole trend of thought of the Gītā which has no

love for abstractions. Even that great abstraction of the Sāmkhya, Prakṛti, loses its abstract character in the Gītā when it is regarded as the Prakṛti of God. So, too, the Vedantist's abstraction—Brahman—undergoes a thorough transformation in the Gītā.

Coming now to the details of the cosmic scheme of the Bhagavad-Gītā, there are two Prakṛtis, namely, Parâ Prakṛti and Aparâ Prakṛti, which are both Prakṛtis of God. The Parâ Prakṛti, as stated in Chap. VII. 5, is the supreme nature of the Divine which is described as the life-principle (*Jîva-bhûta*) that sustains the universe. The Aparā Prakṛti is the eightfold Prakṛti which, according to the orthodox Sāṃkhya, is constituted by Mūlaprakṛti and the seven Prakṛti-vikṛtis (Mahat or Buddhi, Ahaṃkâra and the five tanmātras). The late Lokamanya Tilak in his celebrated *Gītā-Rahasya* has shown why the Gītā has not been able to accept the orthodox view of the eightfold Prakṛti, and the reason is that this view suffers from one fundamental defect, namely, that of putting Mūlaprakṛti and the Prakṛti-vikṛtis in the same category. The Gītā, therefore, adds *manas* to the seven Prakṛti-vikṛtis and looks upon the totality constituted by the eight Prakṛti-vikṛtis as denoting the essence of Prakṛti.

So much for the Aparā Prakrti. Above the Aparā Prakrti is the Parā Prakṛti which, as Sri Aurobindo explains, is only "the will and the executive power of the Purusa, his activity of being—not a separate entity, but himself in power" (*Vide Essays on the Gita*, 2nd Series 2nd edn, p 7). Purusa, again, is divided into Ksara Purusa and Aksara Purusa. The Ksara Purusa is the world of finite conscious beings, 'क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि", whereas the Aksara Purusa is the immutable principle, called also Aksara Brahman,[1] underlying this world (कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते).

Above both the Ksara and the Aksara Purusa there is the Purusottama, the highest principle of the Gitā. We have already discussed the nature of the Purusottama and we shall discuss it more in the sequel.

Purusa, in relation to the physical and mental world, is called *ksetrajña* (knower of the field), the physical and mental world in which he lives being called *kṣetra*. Quite appropriately, therefore, the knowledge that characterizes Purusa as *ksetrajña* is described in terms which clearly have

[1] We have taken it for granted that Purusa is conscious, though no less an authority than Dr S N Dasgupta holds a contrary view. For Dr Dasgupta's views on this point, see his *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, pp 471-72.

reference to practical life (*Vide* Gītā, XIII 7 11) This knowledge, in fact, represents the attitude which Puruṣa is to take in regard to the world in which he lives, and therefore, is ethical The late Lokamanya Tilak laid stress upon this, and said that in a Mokṣaśastra the knowledge that was important was not the knowledge of this or that object, but it was *samya buddhi* in regard to the world with which one had to deal Such knowledge, in fact, as the Gita has repeatedly said in the earlier chapters, is the basis of ethical life and is comprehended in karmayoga

We now understand the cosmic scheme of the Bhagavad Gītā and the place which Karma occupies in this scheme Karma is the fundamental principle which makes the universe at all possible It is in fact another name for the self-sacrifice of Akṣara Brahman for the sake of the creation of beings It must therefore even in this world be always informed by the same spirit of sacrifice which inspired the first act of the Akṣara Brahman Karma that has any ethical value must be completely disinterested, done only from a sense of duty Another thing which follows from the cosmic setting of Karma is the removal of the illusion that we are the authors of our actions Arjuna possessed this illusion in a high degree

but it was removed through the Cosmic Vision, when the Lord, pointing to Drona and other enemies of Arjuna, said, "I have killed them all Be thou only the instrumental cause"[2]

Karma, as understood by the Gītā, has throughout a cosmic significance The Gītā evidently does not believe in any ethics divorced from metaphysics, nor does it believe in any metaphysics which has no bearing upon practical life The gigantic cosmic scheme which it presents before us has not only value as knowledge but is the basis upon which is erected the Gīta's ethical structure This is most strikingly illustrated, as we have already seen, in the thirteenth chapter where, in the account

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[2] This does not mean that the Gita does not believe in human freedom On the contrary, it expressly states that we are the authors of our own destiny, that we can make or unmake ourselves "A man should uplift himself by his own self, so let him not weaken this self For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself" (Chap VI, 5)

What it denies is that we are the *ultimate* authors of our actions We are undoubtedly subject to the eternal cosmic purposes, but, subject to this limitation, we enjoy freedom It should also be remembered that the freedom which the Gita values is what Sidgwick calls "rational freedom," the freedom which consists in being true to one's rational self and in mastering desires and passions The desires for authorship (*kartṛtva*) is emphatically denounced as an *asura* quality (XVI, 14) It may be mentioned here that this rational freedom is freedom as it is conceived also by Spinoza and Kant

given of what is true knowledge, only moral qualities find a place.

From the point of view of the realization of the cosmic significance of karma, we may divide the Gītā into three parts. The first part, consisting of the first six chapters, contains preliminary instructions relating to the nature of karma, as well as knowledge, and the relation between the two, with a view to establishing the foundations of a karmayoga. It is true that the cosmic aspect of karma is occasionally mentioned, as for example, in Chap. III. 15, where it is said "कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि" but the teaching is in the main confined to the human plane, to the conception of duty *from* the individual human standpoint.

This preliminary instruction is very important and may be called the Rongbuk Basal Camp, to use an imagery with which one is very familiar these days, from which the ascent of the soul to cosmic consciousness and to the Supra-Cosmic Reality begins. The first part of the ascent—the ascent *from the Rongbuk Basal Camp to the* North Col, as we may call it—is the subject-matter of Chapters 7-10. In Chapter 7 we find the commencement of the ascent. Here for the first time the teaching takes a distinctly cosmic turn. The distinction between Parâ and Aparâ

Prakṛti is shown and God is represented as the Reality upon which the whole universe is strung "like rows of pearls on a string" But it is not before the eighth chapter that the real ascent to the peak begins, for it is in this chapter that the *cosmic significance of karma is revealed to* us, as also the supra-cosmic source of it in the Aksara Brahman Man's cosmic destiny is also discussed, and there is, in consequence, a good deal of detailed exposition of eschatological problems

The cosmic problems are further discussed in the ninth chapter The transcendence of God *vis a vis* all created beings, is shown, God being depicted as the support of all beings, without being rooted in any of them (भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थ) The eschatological problems of the previous chapter are also further discussed and in greater detail

But as we reach the tenth chapter there is a further and a much bigger jump into the cosmic sphere The supreme word (*paramam vachah*) is imparted to Arjuna He is given instruction in the Vibhūtis or infinite powers of God If, as Sir Aurobindo says, "the message of the Gita reveals to the human soul his cosmic spirit, reveals his absolute transcendence, reveals himself in man and in all beings," then the tenth chapter is a most important part of this message

37183

We have now reached the North Col. But the most difficult part of the ascent still remains. This is done in the eleventh chapter. Arjuna has already had instruction in the Vibhūtis or *infinite powers of God. But this instruction* has only touched his intellect: he has had so far no personal realization of the infinite greatness of God. This want is removed in the eleventh chapter by the revelation to Arjuna of the Cosmic *Form (Visva-Rūpa) of God. This Form is so* stupendous and so awe-inspiring that Arjuna, in spite of the unique privilege which he enjoyed of receiving instruction from Lord Krishna Himself, and in spite of the fact that the previous chapter had given him an intellectual grasp of the nature of the Cosmos and its relation to its Supra-Cosmic Creator, literally shook with fear at the sight of the infinite glory and greatness of the Lord and begged Him to resume His human form:—"Overjoyed am I to have seen what I saw never before; yet my mind is distracted with terror. Show me, O Deva, that other Form of Thine. Have mercy, O Lord of Devas, O Abode of the Universe" (Chap. XI. 45). Some European scholars (Garbe, Otto) want to make a distinction between the *ghora-rūpa* and the *visva-rūpa*. But the Gītā evidently does not

treat the distinction as important, but merges the *ghora-rûpa* in the *visva-rûpa.*

Although the vision of the Visva-rūpa is completed in the eleventh chapter, yet the realization of it requires for its consummation the twelfth chapter. Indeed, it is only through the attitude of Bhakti, which is the subject-matter of the twelfth chapter, that the *realization of the* Cosmic Form of God is at all possible. This appears clearly from what Lord Krishna himself says towards the end of the eleventh chapter: "By the single-minded devotion I may in this Form be known, O Arjuna, and seen in reality, and also entered into, O Scorcher of Foes" (Chap. XI. 54). "He who does work for Me alone and has Me for his goal, is devoted to Me, is freed from attachment, and bears enmity towards no creature—he entereth into Me, O Pāṇḍava" (*Ibid.* 55).

The twelfth chapter, in fact, is a continuation of the idea expressed in the above lines. This is at once evident if we compare the above two verses of the eleventh chapter with the following two verses of the twelfth chapter: "But those who worship Me, relinquishing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded Yoga,—*to these whose*

mind is set on Me, verily I become ere long, O son of Pṛthâ, the Saviour out of the ocean of the mortal Samsâra" (6-7)

The true attitude, indeed, which alone makes it possible to realize the infinite greatness of God is that indicated in the following verse of the twelfth chapter. "Fix thy mind on Me only, place thy intellect in Me (then) thou shalt no doubt live in me hereafter" (8) The ascent, therefore, is completed in the twelfth chapter.

But the Gītā's object is not merely to exhibit the process of the ascent of the Soul. If that were so, the Gītā might as well have ended with the twelfth chapter Some Western scholars indeed, notably the late Dr Rudolf Otto, look upon the eleventh chapter as giving the final word of the Gītā [3] But we consider this to be a mistaken view. In our opinion, the Gītā's

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[3] The late Dr Rudolf Otto, in his paper entitled "Die Urgestalt der Bhagavadgita," after quoting Verses 32-34 of the eleventh chapter, said —

"These words should be called the *charama sloka*, the highest Verse of the Gita For it is here that the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna first acquires its meaning Not on a universal 'doctrine of God', not on Sankhya or Yoga, not even on the Bhakti doctrine does Krishna lecture to Arjuna, but he discloses to him the meaning of his own situation and with it his clear duty . . . Most intimately, therefore, is Chapter XI, the great theophany, related to our *original connection*."

object is as much to depict the descent of the Soul, after it has realized its cosmic purpose, to the human plane, the material and mental world in which man lives, as its ascent to its Supra-Cosmic Source. The Gītā does not consider it enough that the Soul should rise to the cosmic plane and to its Supra-Cosmic Source. It thinks it equally necessary that it should view, in the light of this cosmic realization, the facts and principles governing the mental and physical world in which human beings live. The Gītā does not treat the world in which we live as one to be ignored and treated as an illusion, but considers it essential to cultivate the right relation to it. This is the task which it undertakes in the last six chapters. The revelation of the Cosmic Form of the Lord completely transforms the Soul and makes it fit for the process of descent. As Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gita says*, "A reconciling greater knowledge, a diviner consciousness, a high impersonal motive, a spiritual standard of oneness with the will of the divine acting on the world from the fountain light and with the motive power of the spiritual nature—this is the new inner principle of works which is to transform the old ignorant action. A knowledge which embraces oneness

with the Divine and arrives through the Divine at conscious oneness with all things and beings, a will emptied of egoism and acting only by the command and as an instrumentation of the secret Master of works, a Divine love whose one aspiration is towards a close intimacy with the supreme Soul of all existence , . . are the foundation offered for his activities to the liberated man. For from that foundation the soul in him can suffer the instrumental nature to act in safety; he is lifted above all cause of stumbling, delivered from egoism and all its limitations, rescued from all fear of sin and evil and consequence, exalted out of that bondage to the outward nature and the limited action which is the knot of the Ignorance" (*Essays on the Gita,* 2nd Series, 2nd edn. pp. 178/79).

The last six chapters depict the descent of the Soul after its supreme Cosmic Realization to the world in which human beings live and move. The instruction imparted in these chapters is different from that imparted in the previous ones. The problems dealt with are more concrete, and the teaching is directed more towards the solution of these concrete problems than towards the elucidation of purely theoretical questions. *Arjuna* is no longer asked merely to keep himself

unattached but he is asked to go through life with a distinctly positive attitude

The man who has had the vision of the Cosmic Form of the Lord, when he descends to the physical and mental world in which human beings live, must view this world as the field (*kṣetra*), of which he is the knower (*kṣetrajña*) It is the field alike of knowledge and of action It is both individual and universal, for there is, besides the individual field, the universal field, of which the knower is no other than the Supreme Spirit, described as "the knower in all the fields" (*sarvakṣetreṣu kṣetrajña*) The field comprises, in addition to what is physical, the whole of our sensuous, intellectual and emotional nature, as will appear from the following description of it "The great elements, egoism, intellect, as also the unmanifested, the ten senses and the one (mind), and the five objects of the senses, desire, hatred, pleasure pain, the aggregate, intelligence, fortitude,—the Ksetra has been thus briefly described with its modifications" (Chapter XIII 5-6)

It is, in fact, what the Gītā has already called the Prakṛti It will not do for us to ignore it and live a kind of blessed isolated life, immersed in solitary contemplation of the Eternal

and Immutable The Gita does not favour this kind of isolation but asks us to face the world and to see in it the working of the Eternal Spirit It has never favoured the idea of renouncing the world and treating it as an illusion

It is also significant that the knowledge of which the Gita speaks in the thirteenth chapter, the knowledge which entitles the self to be called *ksetrajña*, is not theoretical but eminently practical This knowledge is described in verses 8 12 of this chapter The essence of this knowledge consists in the realization of the most important moral qualities, such as humility, unpretentiousness, harmlessness, forgiveness, rectitude, absence of egoism, unflinching devotion to God to the exclusion of other objects, some of which are negative and some positive Altogether seventeen qualities are mentioned, of which seven are positive and the rest negative The enumeration of these moral qualities and the identification of them with knowledge prove, if any proof indeed were needed, that the Gita does not believe in knowledge divorced from practice The object of calling the realization of these moral qualities knowledge is evidently to point out that Purusha being *kṣetrajña*, man must not

abstain from action[4] This conclusion agrees with the teaching in the earlier chapters of the Gitā but differs in the manner in which it is presented, for it is communicated to a person who has had the Cosmic Vision and therefore knows the cosmic setting of karma

The person who has had the Cosmic Vision should not only know himself as *kṣetrajña* but as above the reach of the three gunas It is only then that he can discharge his function properly in this world In the earlier chapters absolute non-attachment to worldly things is put forward as the *sine qua non* of the performance of duty But it is only when he realizes that he is above the three gunas that a man can totally remain unaffected by whatever goes on in this world As the Gitā puts it "The same in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe, relinquishing all undertakings—he is said to have gone beyond the gunas" (Chap XIV 25)

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[4] The fear of being affected by action is at the back of the minds of those who advocate inaction This is, however, a groundless fear, for really Puruṣa never acts, all action being done by Prakṛti (*Vide* Chap XIII, 20)

See also Ch III 27 and 28 Purusa, never being really the author of actions, cannot be affected by them

The fifteenth chapter introduces us to the conception of Puruṣottama, the most important conception in the Gītā. What strikes us here is the richness and concreteness of this conception, as contrasted with the abstract conception of Akṣara Brahman. Such a *concrete* conception is indeed what we require in order to understand the process of descent. God is here regarded *not merely in His transcendent* aspect as a Creator of the universe but He is viewed as the indwelling principle of the whole world of conscious and unconscious beings. The descent of God takes, indeed, two forms. In the first place, it takes the form of Avatāra, or descent in an individual human form, which has been described in verses 6-8 of the fourth chapter. The meaning of Avatāra has been beautifully explained by Sri Aurobindo as follows: "The Avatāra comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order *that the human nature may*, by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatâra establishes is given for that purpose chiefly; the Christ,

attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence" (*Ibid*, pp. 229-30).

This is one type of descent. But there is another and a more diffuse descent into the whole of Nature and the world of conscious and unconscious beings. This is the descent of which the fifteenth chapter treats. The general nature of it is exemplified in verses 7, 12 and 13.

The Divine Principle has shed its awful aloofness here and become the indwelling principle, actively interested in upholding and also uplifting the universe. Although it has become immanent, it is not the God of the pantheists, for it does not melt itself into the universe. Only a part of it is transformed into the world of life (ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः). Although it is the indwelling principle of the universe, it still remains standing upon and over it (अधिष्ठाय). God, viewed in this aspect of descent, is the Puruṣottama of the fifteenth chapter.

Krishna, Buddha stands in its centre as its gate, he makes through himself the way man shall follow. That is why each Incarnation holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body, *mānushīm tanum āśritam* and the Supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity" (*Essays on the Gītā*, First Series, pp. 217-18). He further explains: "The Avatâra, therefore, is a direct manifestation in humanity by Krishna the divine Soul of that divine condition of being, to which Arjuna, the human Soul, the type of a highest human being, a Vibhuti, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, and to which he can only arise by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity. It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb; it is the

attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence" (*Ibid*, pp. 229-30).

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The Soul in its descent into this world meets with a peculiar situation, a situation created by the clash of opposite qualities. It is with this situation that the sixteenth chapter deals. *These opposite qualities are respectively, the* Deva and the Āsura qualities. The Āsura

qualities are destructive of the self and are the surest way to hell

The seventeenth chapter deals with a very important aspect of our practical life, namely, the aspect of faith (*śradhha*) The Gita enunciates here a very striking doctrine "A man is what his object of faith is" This may be called a kind of pragmatism, the pragmatism of faith It is curious to note here how the Western pragmatism of modern times, which started in William James with the lower empirical type, gradually advanced to higher and higher forms, until it almost reached in Schiller and Papini a type which comes close to the 'pragmatism of faith' of the Gita So strong is the Gita's conviction that for the proper discharge of our duty, it is essential to act according to faith, that it goes to the extreme of saying that actions done without faith are all *asat*, understanding the word in its double sense of 'unreal' and 'wrong' "Whatever is sacrificed, given or performed, and whatever austerity is practised without *śraddha*, it is called *asat*, O Partha, it is naught here or hereafter" (Chapter XVII 28)

From the point of view of *śraddha*, all actions can be divided into three classes *Sattvika*, *rajasika*, and *tamasika* All sacrifice, tapas,

charity, even food exhibit these three types Virtue lies in chosing in each of these kinds of action the *sāttvika* type and discarding the other two

We come now to the last chapter of the Gita which is the longest, as well as the most important chapter of this great book It starts from the point where the other chapters end It takes for granted that Arjuna has understood the distinction, as well as the relation, between the paths of knowledge and action, that he has understood the cosmic setting of karma, has had the Vision of Visva-rūpa and therefore understood his place in the gigantic cosmic scheme, and as a result of it has acquired the attitude of Bhakti It further assumes that he has already received instruction proper to the descent of the soul, that he knows the relation, as well as the distinction, between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, that he is aware of the differences of the three gunas and knows himself as *nistraigunya* (free from the then gunas), that he has understood the concrete nature of God as Purusottama, has further learnt the distinction between Daiva and Āsura qualities and realized the importance of *śraddhā* in all actions and the necessity of keeping to the pure form of *śraddhā*, namely, *sāttvikī śraddhā*

Now the final instruction proper to the soul in its descent is given This instruction may be broadly classed under two heads instruction relating to the proper attitude towards the world, and that relating to the proper attitude towards God The first deals with the question which has been discussed in the previous chapters, namely, what is the place of karma in the spiritual life. The Gītā gives the same answer which it gave in the earlier chapters, namely, the indispensability of karma for the spiritual life On the subject of karma it further enunciates in this chapter the principle which it mentioned once before (Chap III 35) · "श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुण परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्" This principle has been interpreted in various ways, the most common interpretation being that it gives a moral justification for the caste system But as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, this is not the correct interpretation To quote his words · "Too much has been made of its connection with the outer social order, as if the object of the Gītā were to support that for its own sake or to justify it by a religio philosophical theory In fact, it lays very little stress on the external rule and a very great stress on the internal law which the Varna system attempted to put into regulated outward practice" (*Essays on the Gita,*

Second Series, p. 379). It is true the Gītā lays down four fundamental types of human nature which it calls respectively, the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, and says that every human being must conform to the law of one or other of these types. But in the first place, it should be observed that these types are defined by their inner nature and not by their external action, it being expressly stated that their functions must be in accordance with their nature. Secondly, the jīva being himself a portion (aṃśa) of the Lord there cannot be any fundamental contradiction between his law and the cosmic law of the four types of which the author is the Lord Himself. The Gītā, in fact, does not believe in any contradiction between the cosmic law and the human law. That follows indeed from the conception of Puruṣottama, as we have already seen, as the indwelling principle of the jīvas as well as of the whole universe.

Indeed, the problem with which the Gītā is faced here is the same as that with which idealistic philosophers, like Green and Bradley, are confronted, and its solution is essentially the same as theirs. What Bradley with the help of his conception of "my station and its duties" and

THE IDEA OF CONFLICT IN THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ**

The greatness of the Bhagavadgītā lies in the fact that it does not deal with an artificially simple view either of human nature or of the universe around us. The unity, therefore, which it establishes is a unity in the midst of great diversity and complexity, and is a much deeper unity than one which is obtained by ignoring all inconvenient differences. The central fact with which the Gītā starts and which it always keeps in mind through all its eighteen chapters is the presence of conflict. It is this which gives it its ethical character, for moral life is not possible unless there is some conflict. The life of a saint who has no doubts, who is never troubled by what we call perplexities of conscience, is beyond the pale of morality. If Arjuna were a perfect saint, he would have no moral problems, and the Gītā would lose its ethical character entirely.

Every chapter of the Gītā presents us with a problem of conflict. The conflicts vary with the different chapters, and with it also vary the

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**Reprinted from *Professor K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar Commemoration Volume* 1940.

different solutions that are offered with a view to resolving the conflict. The different Yogas which form the titles of the different chapters are so many different ways in which the conflicts depicted in the different chapters can be removed.

I will briefly explain here what I mean by the word 'yoga.' Sri Krishna Prem has explained yoga as follows in his book, *The yoga of the Bhagavadgītā*: "By yoga is here meant not any special system called by that name, not jñana-yoga nor karma-yoga, nor the eightfold yoga of Patañjali, but just the Path by which man unites his finite self with the Infinite Being. It is the inner path of which these separate yogas are so many one-sided aspects. It is not so much a synthesis of these separate teachings as that prior undivided whole of which they represent partial formulations" (p. xiv). I accept this view of yoga, but I would like to add that it means also the realization of integral personality through the removal of conflict and also the realization of the unity of the individual and the universe by the same means. In other words, yoga means a threefold union—union of ourselves with ourselves, leading to the realization of our integral personality, union of ourselves with the universe, and lastly, union of ourselves with God. The

way to the realization of this threefold unity is the removal of conflict. Each chapter of the Gītā presents to us one kind of conflict and exhibits also one kind of yoga for the solution of the conflict. But it is important to remember that not one of the conflicts depicted in any of the chapters is finally resolved by the yoga mentioned in that chapter but requires for its final resolution the whole series of eighteen yogas. This explains the frequent repetition and overlapping of the subject-matter of the different chapters which is such a puzzling feature of the Gītā.

The idea of conflict, therefore, is a germinal idea in the Bhagavadgītā, and my object in this paper is to show how this idea develops and what different forms it assumes as we proceed from one chapter to another.

Not that the Gītā stops with merely presenting to us the idea of conflict. Its object is not merely to exhibit a moral problem or a metaphysical problem, but its object is intensely practical, namely, to show the way in which a solution of the different problems may be sought.

The conflicts may be broadly classed under three heads: (1) the conflicts that arise within the individual himself, (2) the conflict between

the individual and the cosmic forces, (2) the conflict between the cosmic and the supra-cosmic.

The individual is himself the centre of a number of conflicting impulses and tendencies. He is divided within himself, and on account of this division, he does not know what path to follow. The first six chapters of the Gītā depict this conflict and this division within the individual himself.

First, there is the conflict between the naive impulses of the individual and what he vaguely senses to be his duty. This is depicted in the first chapter Arjuna is seized with despair, because his naive impulses prompt him to abandon a war which involves the killing of so many of his own kinsmen, while he has a vague consciousness that as a Kṣatriya he ought to fight. The result of this conflict is a total paralysis of his will, and he drops his bow and arrow in utter dejection. Here it should be remembered that Arjuna has had no instruction either in ethics or in metaphysics He is a totally uninstructed person, and his action is solely prompted by his untrained impulses. That he has had no instruction, that his mind is wholly untrained, is evident from various statements about him He is, *for instance*,

superstitious; he sees omens ("निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव") when about to begin the battle. He has no power of reflection, he simply goes on repeating the dire consequences that will follow from war; his mind is clouded and he wants instruction from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa's ironical words to him, "प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे" also indicate how utterly lacking in wisdom he is. Arjuna therefore is the type of the uninstructed soul, guided by goody goody notions of refraining from doing harm, not, of course, true *ahiṃsā* which proceeds from a rational perception of the worth and dignity of life and is therefore based upon reason. I need hardly point out that *Arjuna's hesitation to fight is not* prompted by any true *ahiṃsā* but is a more or less instinctive shrinking from violence. Mr. D. S. Sharma in his excellent *Introduction to the Bhagavadgītā* very nicely discusses this matter, and I cannot do better than quote his words: "His (Arjuna's) resolution that he would rather forego his gain than do violence to his dearly cherished affections, clouds the whole issue to the casual reader as well as to Arjuna himself. The latter, instead of appearing in his true colours as one who falls short of heroism, actually poses in his self-righteousness as the exponent

of a type of heroism even superior to that of his class. We surely misunderstand the situation if we take Arjuna's words at their face-value. But his charioteer, the Divine Searcher of hearts knows better. He is not baffled by the objections trotted out by Arjuna. He quietly snubs his friend's self-righteousness at the outset by saying ironically, 'You speak words of wisdom,' and proceeds to lay bare the real situation." (*Introduction to the Bhagavadgītā*, pp. 42-43)

The second chapter carries the conflict from the point where the first chapter leaves it. The first chapter merely presents before us the conflict but does not try to clarify it, much less to resolve it. This the second chapter does. It shows what the basis of the conflict is and how it can be overcome by throwing the floodlight of knowledge upon it. For this will have for its effect the demonstration that Arjuna's shrinking from fighting is not justified by reason at all, but is purely promoted by unreasoning repugnance. The glorious verses (11-30) depicting the immortality of the soul and the foolishness of feeling grief at death exhibit the standpoint of knowledge, as against that of naïve sentiment. The latter part of this chapter (verses 31-72) depicts the nature of duty and the characteristics

of the man having a balanced mind (स्थितप्रज्ञ) The conflict is thus lifted in the latter part of this *chapter from the plane of naive impulses to* that of reflection The two main topics discussed in the second half of the chapter form, however, not two but one topic Duty is to be performed in the spirit of the *sthitaprajña* Duty performed in any other spirit is really not duty. We should think in this connection of Kant's view that actions done from any principle other than reason exhibits heteronomy and not autonomy

The sāmkhyayoga which is taught in this chapter thus means the overcoming, through discriminating knowledge, of the opposition between naive shrinking from killing anybody and rational reflection upon what one's duty is It also means the elucidation of the nature of duty from the standpoint of discriminating knowledge, resulting in the realization of the condition of a *sthitaprajña*

But the conflict is not overcome in the second chapter It only passes from the stage of unreflecting naive feeling to that of conscious reflection Conscious reflection, however, creates its own conflicts The resolution of the conflict through knowledge opens the door for a further

conflict, the conflict between knowledge and work The first fruit of reflection is thus the emergence of the conflict in another form

In this form, as the Gita explains, the conflict is most perplexing The words of Arjuna in the first verse of the third chapter

"ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मताबुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किंकर्मणिघोरे मा नियोजयसि केशव"॥

clearly show what perplexity the conflict causes *On the one hand, knowledge is shown to be the way to salvation*, on the other hand, it is equally strongly emphasized that work should not be abrogated The solution of the conflict is through karmayoga which, while retaining the advantages of the way of knowledge, yet enjoins the performance of work The method of doing this is admirably indicated in verse 30 of the third chapter by the words, "मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणिसन्यस्य" Even if external enemies do not exist, there are the internal enemies, the passions and desires, and it is in the conquest of these through karma yoga that the reconciliation of knowledge and work is effected

एव बुद्धे पर बुध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रु महाबाहो कामरूप दुरासदम् ॥ III 43

This is the solution of the third chapter—the reconciliation of *jñana* and *karma* with the

help of *karmayoga* The late Lokamanya Tilak believed that this was the final reconciliation of the opposition the ultimate message of the Gitā But this would be to treat the remaining fifteen chapters as having no independent message of their own This, in my opinion, would be a very inadequate view of the purpose of the Gitā and is wholly untenable

I therefore believe that the Gītā's teaching does not stop with the third chapter Indeed, it cannot stop there, for the conflict reappears In spite of the teaching of the previous chapter, doubt still lurks in the mind of Arjuna He has not clearly understood the nature of Lord Krishna to whom in the previous chapter he is asked to surrender all his actions He still believes that Lord Kṛsna is only a human being and fails to realize that he is the eternal God Thus the first task of Lord Kṛsna in the fourth chapter of the Gītā is to instruct Arjuna in the doctrine of Avatāra Lord Kṛsna speaking to Arjuna, behaving as his most intimate friend and teacher, is the *avatāra* of God Himself, although he appears in the human form This doctrine of *avatāra* is not further developed in this chapter[1] which proceeds from the enunciation of this doctrine to the conclusion to be drawn from it,

namely, that provided one has the right knowledge one can *understand how even in doing work* one does not impair the purity of one's nature but can maintain it in its absolute unsullied condition :

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स लिप्यते ॥ IV. 14.

What is important is not to eschew action, but to have action burnt by the fire of knowledge :

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ IV. 19.

The knowledge here spoken of is different from the mere discriminating knowledge (buddhi) mentioned in Chapter II. It is the knowledge that arises from the contemplation of God and consists in the *realization* of the *all*-pervading nature of God ("वासुदेवः सर्वमिति"). It is also described as that knowledge by which "you can see all beings without exception in yourself and thus in Me" ("येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि") It is the knowledge which by removing all doubts, establishes oneself in *yoga* (iv. 42). Although this yoga is called *Jñānavibhāgayoga*, that is, yoga of the section of knowledge, yet it is not yoga of partial knowledge, but it is given this title, because, as explained by Sri Krishna Prem in the footnote to p. 29 of his *Yoga of the*

Bhagavadgīta, it is knowledge which is applied to one particular subject, namely *yajña*[2] Śankara takes the title of this chapter to be *jñanakarmasannyasayoga* This is also the title of this chapter in Lokamanya Tilak's *Gītarahasya* If we accept this title, then the purport of the chapter will be to show how true yoga consists in surrendering to God both action and knowledge In verse 33 of this chapter, in fact, it is stated, " Better than the sacrifice of any material objects is the sacrifice of knowledge " The true yajña is the yajña of knowledge, the pure disinterested pursuit of knowledge

The doubt of Arjuna is not[1] removed even after the instruction communicated to him in the first four chapters He therefore asks Lord Kṛṣṇa for fuller instruction

सन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥

The conflict this time is between *sannyāsa* and *karmayoga* The reconciliation, as effected in the fifth chapter, consists in showing that both lead equally to the highest bliss (सन्यास कर्मयोगश्च नि श्रेयसकरावुभौ) though of the two, *karmayoga* is the better A little later, it is said that the two paths are the same[3]

यत् साख्यै प्राप्यते स्थान तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एक साख्यञ्च योगञ्च य पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ V 4

(The word 'sāmkhya' in this verse means the path of knowledge enjoying the renunciation of all work)

The identity of the two paths is due to the fact that the essence of sannyasa does not lie in the renunciation of action as such but in the renunciation of action prompted by desire ("काम्याना कर्मणा न्यासं सन्यास कवयो विदु" XVIII 2) This appears further from V 3, where it is said that the true sannyasin is he who neither hates nor desires The same thing appears also from v 6, where it is said that it is difficult to attain *sannyāsa* without yoga, that is, *karmayoga* What makes *sannyāsa* of value is precisely that which is found in *karmayoga*, that is, non attachment to objects Where this non-attachment is present, there is no bondage in work (v 7) It is further said in vi 1 that "he who performs his duty without reference to the fruits of his action is a sannyasin, a yogin, and not the man who is without fire and without rites"

So far the conflicts have been horizontal that is to say, there has been no implication that one of the two conflicting ideas is higher than the other. But in the sixth chapter there is

introduced for the first time the idea of a vertical conflict. The basal idea of this conflict appears in vi. 3.

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

Here a contrast is made between the condition of the man who is a seeker after yoga and that of the man who has already attained yoga. Lokamanya Tilak in his interpretation of this verse has pointed out the false interpretation which is made by the followers of the *sannyāsamārga*. According to the latter, the verse means that for the seeker after yoga karma is the cause of yoga, but for the man who has attained yoga, discarding of karma is the cause of his continuing in yoga. This interpretation, as Lokamanya Tilak has pointed out, is manifestly inconsistent with vi. 1, where it is distinctly stated that neither the sannyasin nor the yogin abandons work but only the fruit of work. The interpretation which Lokamanya Tilak has given of this verse undoubtedly seems more natural than the one given by the followers of the path of sannyāsa. According to this interpretation, the verse no doubt contrasts the condition of the man who has attained yoga with that of the man who is a seeker after yoga, but the

contrast only lies in this, that whereas for the former, karma is the cause of *śama* or peace of mind, in the latter, *śama* is the cause of karma.

This idea of a vertical conflict is also brought out clearly in vi. 5, where it is said that the higher self must control the lower self ("उद्धरेत् आत्मनाऽऽत्मानम्"). This conflict is resolved either in meditation (dhyāna) or in spirituality (adhyātma-yoga), according as we accept the first or the second as the title of this chapter.

From now onward vertical conflicts are the rule. The conflicts within the individual are now partially overcome (of course, a complete resolution of these conflicts, as has been already said, only takes place after instruction in *all* the eighteen yogas has been imparted); but there begins another conflict—the conflict between the individual and the Cosmic Reality, including its Supra-Cosmic Source. This new conflict is the theme of the next six chapters. I have shown in the previous essay how essential it is to bring into view the cosmic factor in understanding that which apparently only concerns the individual. Chapters VII-XII describe what I have called in that essay the ascent of the soul. The ascent is from the

individual to the cosmic and from the cosmic to the supra-cosmic.

The beginning of this ascent from the individual to the cosmic standpoint we see in the seventh chapter which is characteristically named the *yoga of knowledge*. If we compare this name with that of the fourth chapter, we find a characteristic difference. The fourth chapter, although dealing with the discipline of knowledge, does not deal with the whole field of knowledge, but as we have already pointed out, with knowledge so far as it relates to one subject, namely, *yajña*. In the seventh chapter, on the other hand, the entire field of knowledge is utilized for the sake of showing the cosmic background of individual life. I need not dwell upon it at great length here, for I have already shown in the previous essay how the cosmic factor always operates in the individual life, giving a new significance to it.

There is a further ascent to the cosmic plane in the eighth chapter which traces the sources of all *karma* to the imperishable Brahman (aksaram brahma). The ascent, in fact, here is beyond the cosmic to the supra-cosmic. The gap between the individual and the cosmic forces and their Supra-Cosmic

Source widens, and it becomes a difficult problem to discover how the gap can be removed. Eschatological ideas are a part of the means employed to bridge over the enormous gulf that separates the individual from the Akṣara Brahman. The individual in this way is given the hope that it is possible for him to reach the Akṣara Brahman after death. Such a hope, for example, is given in the following verse:

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ VIII. 13.

The ninth chapter deals with the yoga of the royal secret (rājaguhya) and the royal science (rājavidyā). The essence of this yoga is the reconciliation of the conflict between the Avyakta or the Unmanifested and the world of diverse beings. The reconciliation consists in the realization that the Unmanifested, although it is the support of beings, yet is not rooted in them ('bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtasthaḥ'). The transition from the cosmic to the supra-cosmic which we have already noticed in the eighth chapter, is more clearly evident in this chapter.

From the nature of the epithets applied to God in verses 16-19 it appears that His transcendent aspect is emphasized more than his immanent one. Such epithets as *pitā*, *mātā*, *dhātā*,

pitāmaha, *gati*, *bhartā*, *prabhu*, *sākṣī*, *nivāsa*, *śaraṇa*, *prabhava*, *pralaya sthāna*, *nidhāna* indicate the transcendence of God, although it must be admitted that there are some epithets, such as *suhṛt*, *bīja* which indicate partially His immanence. Altogether it must be said that the ninth chapter emphasizes the transcendent character of God rather than His immanence. Unless, however, the immanent aspect of God is exhibited, the conflict between the Avyakta and the world of beings cannot be resolved. Indeed, this conflict *is not resolved until we come to the fifteenth* chapter, where it is resolved with the help of the idea of Purusottama.

What should be the attitude of man towards the God depicted in these verses? The attitude is expressed in verse 27:

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि च कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

In other words, the attitude is one of surrender. It is, however, a surrender of the less powerful to the more powerful, of the lower to the higher authority, not the surrender depicted in xviii. 65:

मन्मनाभव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

The transcendent character of God is more developed in the tenth chapter, where He is described as

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान्।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम्॥

He is also called the highest of each kind, and therefore clearly differentiated from others of the same species.

All through these chapters the conflict that we notice is the conflict between the individual and the cosmic forces and between the individual and the Supra-Cosmic Reality. The conflict deepens as we pass from the eighth to the ninth and from the ninth to the tenth chapter, for the gulf between the individual and God widens as more of the transcendent aspect of God is realized.

It reaches, however, its climax in the eleventh chapter which deals with the Visvarūpa (Cosmic Form) of God. This Visvarūpa is really not the cosmic but the supra-cosmic form of God. The transcendent character of God is so pronounced here that Arjuna, although he enjoys the intimacy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, cries out in fear:

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपम् प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास॥

The view, however, which some European writers have put forward, namely, that in the eleventh chapter a distinction is drawn between the *ghorarūpa* and the *viśvarūpa*, does not seem to me to be correct, for the viśvarūpa itself is ghorarūpa, so far as it presents that side of God's nature which is awe-inspiring. The conflict between the individual and the Supra-Cosmic Reality reaches its zenith and cries out for a solution. The resumption by Lord Kṛṣṇa of the human form, thereby showing the identity between the individual and his Supra-Cosmic Source, partially mitigates the horror of the Viśvarūpa but does not completely remove it. There is need, therefore, of a further attempt to bring the two widely separated ends. This is done in the twelfth chapter.

As I have shown in the previous essay, the twelfth chapter is to be looked upon as a continuation of the eleventh. Bhakti is the only attitude which is possible to a man when he sees his own helplessness and insignificance by the side of the stupendous grandeur of the Lord. It is the only way in which a finite individual can bring himself into relation with a Reality which is immeasurably greater. The instruction of the twelfth chapter, therefore, takes the form :

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अतऊर्ध्वं न संशय ॥

The whole chapter is devoted to the discussion of the proper subjective attitude in view of the immeasurable gulf that separates the individual from God. It has therefore to take into account also the weaknesses of some human beings which prevent them from adopting the attitude depicted in the verse quoted above. The Gītā, therefore, lays down in verses 9-11 what those individuals should do who have not got the capacity to follow the instruction given in verse 8. One thing should be noticed in connection with these verses, namely, that although the successive classes mentioned in these verses are in a descending order, so far as the power of abstract reflection is concerned, they are not in a descending order of merit. The order of merit is indicated in verse 12, where those who seek union with God through *abhyāsa* (practice) are placed at the lowest rung of the ladder. Above them are placed those who seek union through knowledge. Above these are those who seek union through *dhyāna* (meditation), and on the top of all are placed those who follow the path of the renunciation of the fruits of action (sarvakarmaphalatyāga)

The Gita here indicates two orders the order of difficulty and the order of merit The two are not identical All the difficulty in the interpretation of these verses arises from the mistaken idea that what is more difficult must be one which has greater merit attached to it That this is not the Gita's view is sufficiently clear from verses 2 5, where the easier method of approaching God through faith is pronounced to be superior to the more difficult path of the worship of the Avyakta In fact, the Gita's general standpoint is that the easier course is always the better course There is therefore no inconsistency in asserting that *sarvakarmaphalatyaga*, which is pronounced to be the easiest of all the methods, is yet the best How it is the easiest of all the methods is explained very carefully in the late Lokamanya Tilak's *Gitarahasya* in the commentary on verse 12

But after all, the solution of the conflict between the finite individual and the Supra cosmic Reality which the twelfth chapter offers is only a subjective one It only shows how the individual can obtain peace in spite of the conflict But it is not able to show how the conflict can be finally resolved

The source of the conflict is really the opposition between the transcendent and immanent conceptions of God, and unless attention is drawn to it, there can be no possibility of realizing God as an indwelling principle. It is therefore the task of the last six chapters to deal with this opposition between the cosmic and the supra-cosmic, and by overcoming it to make the path smooth for the realization of God as an indwelling principle.

It is important to understand clearly what is meant by calling God an indwelling principle. If God is the indwelling principle of the universe, then no part of the universe can be said to be God-forsaken. This whole universe, in fact, will acquire a new dignity—I might say, a new Divinity—by being the medium through which God realizes Himself.

This transformation of the conflict from being one between the individual and the cosmic (including the supra-cosmic) reality into one between the cosmic and the supra-cosmic first appears in the thirteenth chapter which starts with the opposition between the *kṣetra* and the *kṣetrajña*. The kṣetra (field) comprises (vide xiii. 6) the whole world of matter, the ego, the intellect, the ten senses and the mind and

lastly, the five objects of the senses. Over and above this field, however, there is the knower of the field (ksetrajña) There is thus the opposition between the knower and the object which is known. Unless this opposition is overcome, all hope of realizing the oneness of God and the world must for ever be abandoned.

I have shown in the previous essay that the problem of the thirteenth and the next five chapters is the problem of descent. The individual, after ascending to the Supra-cosmic Reality, viewed as a transcendent Power, must descend to the world and find therein also the same Supra-cosmic Reality at work. In other words, he must realize the Divinity of the world

How this Divinity is to be realized, how this opposition between the Ksetra and the Ksetrajña is to be overcome, is the theme of the thirteenth chapter. The opposition is overcome on the emergence of the true knowledge relating to the nature of God and His relation to the universe We have, therefore, in those remarkable verses (verses 14-18 of this chapter) which, in point of depth of thought, grandeur of style and beauty of expression, have perhaps no equal in any literature, a magnificent description of the nature

of God and the relation of the universe to Him. From this description two things are evident, namely, (1) that the world and God do not fall apart, but that the world is throughout sustained and animated by God, and (2) that although God is the indwelling principle of the universe, He is not completely merged in it but maintains His transcendence. This is, of course, no new idea which the Gītā here for the first time enunciates; it has throughout maintained this view of the relation of God and the world. But the previous chapters, especially, the ninth, tenth and the eleventh, emphasized the transcendent aspect of God, and hence a restatement of the true relation with a view to bringing out the immanent character of God is found necessary here. This will be evident if we compare the verses 14-18 of the thirteenth chapter with the verses 17-19 of the ninth chapter. The latter verses emphasize very strongly the transcendent nature of God, whereas the object of the former is to bring out the immanent aspect, while, of course, not giving up the transcendent aspect.

The fourteenth chapter brings before us the conflict between the soul, free, indestructible and eternal—the kṣetrajña of the previous

chapter, the nature of which has been so fully expounded in it—and the bondage caused by the three gunas It might be thought at first sight that this conflict is one within the individual and should therefore have been discussed in the first part of the Gitā But really it is not an individual conflict it is a cosmic conflict It has its source in the nature of the universe which can never free itself from the three gunas The eternal and indestructible spirit working in the universe finds itself hampered by the presence of these gunas How to free it from the bondage of the gunas is therefore a problem

It should be remarked here that the Gita's conception of the gunas is somewhat different from that of the orthodox Sāmkhya In the first place, the Gitā speaks of the gunas as originating from Prakṛti, whereas, according to the orthodox Samkhya, the gunas constitute Prakṛti Secondly, the gunas are looked upon by the Gītā as the universal characteristics of all kinds of mental activity, whereas in orthodox Saṃkhya, the gunas are not qualities but constituent elements of Prakṛti Indeed, all actions are supposed by the Gītā to be determined by specific forms of sattva, rajas and tamas Even

knowledge is classed as sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa.

The fifteenth chapter introduces us to the heart of the conflict between the cosmic and the supra-cosmic. In the chapters which depict the transcendent character of God, He is called Akṣara Brahman. This Akṣara Brahman is described in VIII. 3 as creating the world by Its sacrifice. This is, in fact, Its connection with the world of finite beings. In other respects It is *nirguṇa* and *niṣkriya*. It is, in fact, called *kūṭastha* in XV. 16. But the God who is the indwelling principle of the universe cannot be the Akṣara Brahman whose connection with the world is only that of the creator to the created. A new conception of God as Purusottama is therefore put forward in this chapter :

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

Lokamanya Tilak in his *Gītārahasya* has identified Purusottama with Aksara Brahman, but in view of the explicit statement in this verse, it is not possible to accept this view. The whole teaching of the Gitā in the last six chapters would lose all its meaning if Purusottama were identified with Aksara Brahman. For what

is required is the conception of a concrete God who is not merely the creator of the world but guides and sustains and inspires it Such a conception is that of Purusottama

Sri Aurobindo has stressed the importance of the conception of Purusottama, in addition to that of Aksara Brahman Thus he says, (*Essays on the Gita*, Second Series, pp 258-59) "There is a status which is greater than the peace of the Aksara as it watches unmoved the strife of the gunas There is a higher spiritual experience and foundation above the immutability of the Brahman, there is an eternal dharma greater than rajasic impulsion to works, pravritti, there is an absolute delight which is untouched by rājasic suffering and beyond the sattvic happiness, and these things are found and possessed by dwelling in the being and power of the Puruṣottama"

In the conception of Purusottama God becomes the immanent principle of the universe It is therefore most appropriately said of Him (*vide* verses 12 14), "that His is the light that illumines all this world, that which is in the moon and the fire, that He is the Spirit who, having entered the earth, sustains all beings by His energy, and becoming Soma, nourishes

all plants, and further, that having become the flame of life, He sustains the bodies of living creatures, and united with Prāna and Apāna, digests the four kinds of food (that is, food which is chewed, sucked, licked and drunk)." This description also makes it clear that although God is the indwelling principle of the universe, yet He is not completely merged in it. But if there was any doubt on this point, that is removed by verse 7, where it is stated that only a portion of Him manifests itself as Jīva in the world of living creatures

The conception of Purusottama thus reconciles the opposition between the world and Aksara Brahman.

The sixteenth chapter brings into view the conflict between the daiva and the āsura qualities The conflict is a cosmic one, for the qualities are cosmic qualities and not qualities of individuals, though representatives of these qualities are found in human individuals. That these qualities are cosmic and not individual is indicated by Sri Aurobindo also very clearly. Thus he says, "the ancient mind, more open than ours to the truth of things behind the physical veil, saw behind the life of man great cosmic forces or beings representative

of certain turns or grades of the universal Shakti, divine, titanic, gigantic, demoniac, and men who strongly represented in themselves these powers of nature were themselves considered Devas, Asuras, Rakṣasas, Piśācas. The Gītā for its own purposes takes up this distinction and develops the difference between these two kinds of beings, *dvau bhūta-sargau.*" (*Essays on the Gita*, Second Series, p. 313).

The *daiva* qualities are always to be maintained, and the *āsura* qualities to be put down. Although human beings are born with one or other of these qualities, yet the Gītā gives us the hope that it is possible for everyone to put down the *āsura* qualities and allow himself to be dominated by the *daiva* ones. This is the clear meaning of verse 21 of the sixteenth chapter :

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

Unless it is within the power of man to get rid of the three gates of hell, the injunction 'tyajet' has no meaning.

The problem presented before us in the seventeenth chapter is as follows: The Gītā at the end of the sixteenth chapter says that Śāstra should be followed for the determination

of what is right and what is wrong. Now Arjuna puts the question to Lord Krishna: "Supposing a man does not follow Śāstra but acts full of faith, what is his condition?" Apart from the question of the meaning of the word Śāstra,[4] the difficulty arises whether the problem is one which concerns the individual, or is a cosmic problem. The problem no doubt is dealt with in its application to the individual but as it is one concerning the guṇas, it is also a cosmic problem. It is, in fact, an offshoot of the general problem of the gunas discussed in the fourteenth chapter.

The problem, as Sri Aurobindo points out, is a novel one. It is "of the nature of a powerful adventure into the unknown or partly known, a daring development and a new conquest." The sixteen previous chapters, illustrating sixteen types of yoga already discussed, really show how a man ought to act. The Gītā introduces here a new principle of action, namely, śraddhā or faith, not included in the sixteen kinds of yoga discussed so far, and wants to consider how far it can be accepted as a moral standard.

The chapter begins by stating that a man is as his faith is. There are three kinds of faith—

sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa—and according as a man has one or other of these, he is sāttvika, rājasa or tāmasa. The tapas, the food, the gifts of these three types of men are also respectively, sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa.

The significance of the problem discussed in this chapter is indicated in the last verse of this chapter :

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नोइह ॥

Śraddhā is an essential ingredient of right action. Thus the answer which this chapter gives to Arjuna's question is somewhat as follows: No doubt śraddhā cannot exempt a man from the duty of acting in accordance with Śāstra, but an action, if it is according to Śāstra but if it is not informed by śraddhā, cannot be right.

The problem of this chapter, as we have already said, is a part of the general problem of the guṇas discussed in the fourteenth chapter. The nature of a man in regard to śraddhā is determined by his nature as indicated by the guṇas (सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धाभवति भारत"). The cosmic forces thus determine the nature of śraddhā.

It should be noted, however, that although the problem owes its origin to cosmic forces, it has a subjective aspect also, and it is the

subjective aspect that gives it its peculiar ethical significance The last verse of this chapter makes this clear However objectively right an action may be however completely it may conform to Śastra, if it is not informed by śraddha, it cannot be called right Thus, just as in Green the subjective condition of the purity of the motive is the essential condition *of the rightness of an action, so,* according to the teaching of the Gita, the subjective condition of *śraddha* is the *essential* condition of the rightness of conduct The only difference is that whereas in Green the subjective condition is the sole condition of morality, it is not so in the Gita The objective conditions of morality, indicated by *śastravidhi*, every action must satisfy, but in addition, it must satisfy the subjective condition of śraddhā This is the attitude of the Gita towards the subjective and objective criteria of morality

We come now to the last chapter of the Gita which is the longest, and in many respects, the most important chapter of this great book It summarises the teaching of the previous chapters The instruction which it gives completes *the instruction given in the earlier chapters* The conflict which it resolves is the totality of

the conflict noticed in the previous seventeen chapters. As I have already said at the outset, the conflict which each chapter presents is not finally resolved in that chapter but waits for its final resolution till the end when the final instruction is imparted. This is the peculiarity of the Gītā, where the synthesis which is attempted is one which is not completed immediately but waits till the final synthesis is reached. Thus there is a fundamental difference between the dialectic of the Gītā and that of Hegel. Whereas, according to the latter, each pair of opposites which the dialectic presents is merged and consummated in the synthesis which results from it, in the Gītā, on the contrary, no final synthesis of any conflict is possible until one runs through the whole gamut of the eighteen chapters. Thus, for example, in the Hegelian dialectic the contradiction involved in the category of Being which leads to the positing of its negation, non-Being, results in the immediate synthesis of these two contradictory categories in the higher category of Becoming. It is true that the category of Becoming is itself unstable and leads through its negation to the category of Being Determinate. But what I want to observe is that the category of Being

37183

does not reappear again in its original form in the procession of categories which the dialectic presents before us. In other words, in the Hegelian scheme each synthesis is completed in three steps. I pointed out several years ago in a paper, entitled *The Logic of the Real*, the defect of this view of synthesis and showed how it could be removed by taking a polyadic view of the movement of thought, instead of a triadic one, as was done by Hegal.

Now the Gītā takes such a polyadic view of thought, and that is why no synthesis is completed before the final resolution of all conflict in the eighteenth chapter. We see this very clearly if, for example, we consider the fundamental conflict which is the starting-point of the instruction of the Gītā. This conflict, which forms the theme of the second chapter, is not completely resolved there, but is only finally resolved at the end of the eighteenth chapter when Arjuna exclaims triumphantly:

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥

This lends a special importance to the eighteenth chapter where all the conflicts are finally resolved. It starts with the nature of

sannyasa and *tyaga* and shows how the opposition of them to karma can be overcome by taking sannyasa to mean renunciation of desires, and tyāga to mean the relinquishment of all fruits This is exactly what the Gita has taught in the second and third chapters, and it may seem to be a needless repetition But it is a repetition with a difference, for the Gita does not simply speak of *sannyasa* and *tyaga*, as it does in the earlier chapters, but mentions three different kinds of it, according to the preponderance of the respective gunas So, too, it applies the doctrine of the gunas to the determination of the nature of the different kinds of jñāna, karma, kartā, buddhi, dhṛti, etc, and in this way removes the opposition between them

society in which one finds oneself The Gītā's object, however, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, is not to support the caste system by an ethico-religious theory

I now come to the last part of the eighteenth chapter where the final instruction is imparted to Arjuna This final instruction is called *sarvaguhyatamam vacah* (the most secret word), and runs as follows:

मन्मनाभव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि माशुचः ॥

In other words, this final instruction is Surrender This could not have been imparted to Arjuna before this If he had known God only through His Viśvarupa, he could not have surrendered himself as he could do now This final instruction succeeds in removing all his conflicts which have been mentioned in the previous seventeen chapters

NOTES

1 As I have elsewhere shown, the question is taken up again in the fifteenth chapter and is in fact the central topic of that chapter

2 I have given above the meaning of the word 'jnanavibhagayoga,' as we find it in Sri Krishna Prem's book But the word can, I think, be interpreted in another way The object of the chapter is to show that whatever action is performed acquires its value from the type of knowledge revealed in it The different yajñas, therefore, described in this chapter really stand for the different types of knowledge Consequently, the chapter may approximately be called *Jnānibhāgayoga*, or the yoga of the division of knowledge

3 Śankara also in his commentary on the second sūtra of the *Brahma Sutras* admits that Brahman, although conceived by him as *nirguṇa*, is the cause of the origin, etc, of the universe It should be noticed that Śankara does not here take recourse to the *māyā doctrine*, for he does *not* say that Brahman is the cause *through māya* of the origin etc, of the universe There is no inconsistency, therefore, in saying, as the Gita does, that Akshara Brahman through Its sacrifice creates all beings

4 It is difficult to say what the word '*śāstra*' here means It cannot evidently mean Śruti and Smṛti after the severe indictment of the Vedas in II 42 45 The late Lokamanya Tilak took it in the sense of *Karma yogaśastra* I think it will be better to take it in the sense of *yogaśāstra*, as taught in the Gita

** THE GĪTĀ'S CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM

The conception of human freedom plays so important a part in Western philosophy that we are naturally tempted to inquire what its place is in the Bhagavad Gītā But before we can deal with this question it is necessary to ascertain what human freedom means

J H Hyslop, in a very comprehensive chapter in his *Elements of Ethics* on the Freedom of the Will, has given us three different meanings of freedom, namely, (*a*) spontaneity, (*b*) exemption from external control, and (*c*) velleity or the power of choosing between alternatives His own view is that, although historically, freedom has one or other of these three meanings, yet properly speaking, freedom means velleity or the power of making alternative choice The most essential thing in freedom, according to him, is that at the time of performing an action it should be equally open to one to adopt one or other of the possible alternatives that present themselves

**Reprinted from the Prabuddha Bharata', Sep 1939

We believe that exhaustive as Hyslop's treatment of the problem of freedom is, he has failed to give sufficient importance to the distinction between two fundamentally different ways of looking at the problem of freedom We may look at the problem, for example, from the point of view of our personality as a whole, or we may view it from the more restricted standpoint of the will We may, that is to say, ask either the question Are human beings free? or the more limited question Is the human will free? Failure to recognize this broad division of the main types of freedom leads to great confusion, and this is one of the reasons why some modern ethical writers do not consider the problem of freedom of any ethical importance

If we examine carefully, in the light of this broad division of the meanings of freedom, the threefold meaning of freedom given by Hyslop, we find that the first two meanings of freedom relate to freedom of the Self or of our personality, while the third relates exclusively to freedom of the will

Historically rationalists have in general accepted the first view of freedom, as stated by us, whereas the empiricists and intuitionists have, on the whole, favoured the second view Rationalists,

like Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and the English neo-Hegelians, take freedom to mean freedom of the Self, whilst empiricists, like Hume and Mill, and intuitionists, like Martineau, lean to the other view of freedom. For the rationalist the essential problem is whether our Self is free, or as Kant puts it, whether we are autonomous beings. For the empiricist or the intuitionist, on the other hand, the problem of freedom is the problem whether there is freedom of choice between alternative possibilities.

Let us first examine the rationalist view of freedom, as put forward by the greatest exponent of it, namely, Kant. According to Kant, the fundamental fact of morality is that we are not a part of the system of natural causes. We are free causes, that is to say, we are not subject to the causation of anything other than ourselves. This is the great fact which distinguishes human beings from events in the natural world. In the natural world there are no free causes; all causes are necessary causes, being determined by something other than themselves. Human beings, as moral beings, have this great privilege that they are free causes. As free causes, they enjoy *autonomy* or the power of legislating for themselves. Natural events, on the other hand, exhibit heteronomy or

rule by something external On this fundamental distinction Kant bases the whole of his ethical philosophy

Let us see what consequences follow from this view. Because human beings are autonomous, they are ends in themselves, and not merely means to something else. The moral principle, therefore, may be stated in the following form: So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in the person of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only. This view further leads to the conception of a kingdom of ends or a union of self-legislative beings, which is Kant's conception of ideal society.

Kant believes that to be governed by the principle of pleasure is heteronomy and not autonomy. This shows the fundamental weakness of hedonism in the eyes of Kant. He defines heteronomy as follows: "If the will seeks the law which is to determine it anywhere else than in the fitness of its maxims to be universal laws of its own dictation, consequently, if it goes out of itself and seeks the law in the character of any of its objects, there always results heteronomy" (*Metaphysics of Morals*, Vide Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, p. 59)

Heteronomy, therefore, according to Kant, means rule by any principle other than the pure law of Reason, or the conception of duty for duty's sake. The distinction, however, between autonomy and heteronomy changes somewhat the character of the conception of freedom as originally put forward by Kant. His original conception of freedom was that of being determined by oneself, as opposed to being determined by others. In the new conception of freedom as it emerges from the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy, the contrast is not between determination by oneself and determination by other than oneself, but between determination by the pure law of Reason and determination either by feeling or by understanding and reason, "the employment of which is, by the peculiar constitution of their nature, attended with satisfaction." In both the latter cases, the determination, Kant says, is "by a foreign impulse by means of a particular natural constitution of the subject adapted to receive it." Taking the first type of heteronomy, the rule of feelings and inclinations, the contrast between it and the rule of Reason or autonomy is quite glaring. But this contrast is the contrast between two principles working within us, not the contrast between ourselves

and something othet than ourselves So the original distinction between determination by oneself and determination by other than oneself is reduced to a distinction between two principles working within us

This is a matter of considerable importance, for here we have the connecting link between the Kantian conception of freedom and that of the older rationalists (like Plato and Spinoza) The earlier rationalists conceived freedom in the sense of freedom from the bondage of the senses Plato in his *Phaedo* makes it very clear that deliverance from the bondage of the body, that is, everything that is sensuous and material, is the true freedom, and that consequently, the philosopher, far from fearing death, rather welcomes it He also says that philosophy gives the true knowledge which frees a man from the captivity of the body

no other than adequate ideas, and therefore, has no conception of evil, and consequently, no *conception of good*" *It is clear, therefore, that* for Spinoza freedom and rationality mean the same thing Negatively, bondage is described by Spinoza as subjection to emotions "The impotence of man," he says, "to govern or restrain the affects I call bondage, for a man who is under this control is not his own master, but is mastered by fortune, in whose power he is, so that he *is often forced to follow the worse, although* he sees the better before him" (*Ethics*, Part IV, Preface)

Among the neo Hegelians, perhaps the most important is Thomas Hill Green Green starts with the Kantian distinction between "free causes" and natural causes The question of freedom, therefore, with him is the question of *the origin of motives* If *motives* are of natural origin, then there cannot be any freedom He therefore examines the nature of the motive and finds that it is non natural, being nothing else than the "idea of an end which a self conscious subject presents to itself and which it strives and tends to realize"[1] The motive, in fact, is *nothing*

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[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Fifth Edition, p 100

but the expression of a man's self or character It is this which determines a man's action, and that is why man is free Green thus sticks to Kant's conception of freedom as determination by the Self but he enormously extends the scope of the Self by relating it to the Absolute Self or the Eternal Consciousness, as he chooses to call it This is, in fact, his originality—the beautiful way in which he combines the standpoint of Kant with that of Hegel. As a result of this, Green passes from the standpoint of Law to that of End Morality, for him, is not mere conformity to a barren law, but it is the realization of an end, the end being nothing else than the complete fulfilment of the Self, which ultimately means the realization of the Absolute Self

One thing should be noticed here, and that is, that the second conception of freedom of Kant, namely, that of rational freedom, does not find any place in Green Self-determination, he is careful to point out, does not necessarily mean determination by Reason, for the Self which determines may be a Self which is just above the level of a brute Every free action, that is to say, every action to which moral predicates can be attached, is a self-determined

action, but that does not necessarily mean that it is a rational action, for there are Selves and Selves. Some Selves may show a high degree of rationality; others may be hopelessly irrational. Later idealistic thinkers, as for example, Mackenzie, try to make a compromise between Green's position and that of Kant by saying that although freedom means nothing more than self-determination, yet the highest freedom is rational freedom.[2]

We have not so far dealt with the views of the intuitionists. Martineau may be taken as a very good representative of them. Martineau thinks that freedom means (*a*) that there must be a plurality of simultaneous alternatives, and (*b*) that they must be possibilities to the man to whom they present themselves. This second condition Martineau further explains as follows:—"It must depend *upon us* in relation to them (alternatives) and not upon them in relation to each other, which of them we follow. It is said, 'Yes, it depends *upon ourselves*," but what do I mean by "myself"? Simply *my character as it is*, made up by inheritance, temperament, experience, formed habit and self-discipline: of this aggregate from the past, with

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[2] Vide Mackenzie: *Manual of Ethics*, 6th ed, p. 78.

the outward motives from the present, every decision must be the result; and if the second factor is treated as the thing *given*, then the casting vote is vested with the other; and it is the *character*, i.e., the *self*, which decides. Now I do not deny that the Self which chooses includes all these things . . But I cannot allow that *these exhaust the Ego*, and give a complete account of all its actual and possible phenomena. Besides the effects of which I am the accumulation, I claim also a *personal* causality which is still left over, when my phenomena have told me the tale of what they are and do . . When I judge my own act, I feel sure that *it is mine*; and that, not in the sense that its necessitating antecedents were in my character, so that nothing could prevent its coming; but in the sense that I might have betaken myself to a different act at the critical moment, when the pleadings were over, and only the verdict remained."[3]

It is thus clear that Martineau does not accept the view that freedom means determination by Self or character but he thinks that it implies, on the part of the man acting, the power to betake himself to a different act at the critical

[3] Martineau · *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, pp. 38-40. Third Edition, Revised.

moment. It seems to us that if Martineau had understood that determination by Self or character does not mean determination by anything fixed or static, much of his criticism of the idealistic view of freedom would have lost its force. He makes a distinction between the Self and the Ego, the latter indicating something undetermined and indeterminable, whereas the Self, according to him, is something fixed and determined. Freedom thus means for him the causality of the Ego or, as he calls it, "personal causality,' which he opposes to causality of Self or character. The whole discussion, we think, is vitiated by this artificial distinction between the Ego and the Self.

Freedom, as conceived by Martineau, is what Sidgwick has called "capricious freedom."[4] It means, as he explains, the power of acting without a motive. It is the same as that which Hyslop has called 'velleity.' Hyslop thinks that it has three varieties, for it may mean that volitions are (*a*) causeless, (*b*) motiveless, and (*c*) indifferent. There are two other types of freedom, according to Sidgwick, namely, (1) neutral freedom, and (2) rational freedom. Neutral freedom means freedom to do good as well as evil. It is the first

[4] Vide *Methods of Ethics*, Appendix: The Kantian Conception of free-will.

of the two kinds of freedom we have found in Kant; it is also that which we have found in Green. Rational freedom means that a man is free only when he is completely rational. It is the second kind of freedom we have found in Kant; it is also that which, we have seen, is found in the older rationalists (like Plato or Spinoza).

In the light of what we have said above, let us try to examine the conception of freedom as we find it in the Bhagavad-Gītā. For the Gītā freedom essentially implies rational freedom. That is to say, it looks upon a man as free so far as he is governed by reason. To be free means for the Gītā to be determined by the rational self,, to be free, that is to say, from the control of the senses and the passions. The characteristics of the *Sthitaprajña*, as given in the second chapter, or of the *Bhaktimān* given in the twelfth chapter or of the *Triguṇātīta* as depicted in the fourteenth chapter, are all characteristics of the free man. The free man is the man who is not in bondage, and the Gītā very clearly points out what constitutes bondage. Expressed in most general terms, bondage is attachment to the object of desire. Freedom, therefore, implies non-attachment to the object of desire, and that is why the main part of the teaching of the Gītā is directed towards showing

the importance of the principle of non-attachment. This is, in fact, the pivot round which the teaching of the Gītā moves, just as the conception of freedom is the pivot round which the ethical philosophy of Kant moves. There are hundreds of verses, the object of which is to show the essential importance of the principle of non-attachment. We quote only a few below:

"He who forsaketh all desires and goeth onwards, free from yearnings, selfless and without egoism—he goeth to Peace" (II. 71).

"Contentment with whatsoever he obtaineth without effort, free from the pairs of opposites, without envy, balanced in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound" (IV. 22).

"Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, always content, nowhere seeking refuge, he *is not doing anything, although doing actions*" (IV. 20)

"Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform action which is duty, for by performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme" (III. 19).

"The harmonized man, having abandoned the fruit of action, attaineth the eternal peace; the non-harmonized, impelled by desire, attached to fruit, are bound" (V. 13).

One thing we cannot too strongly emphasize here. The Gītā, like the Western rationalists, lays more stress upon the freedom of man than upon the freedom of the will. And man is free, says the Gītā, if he realizes his rational self, if he becomes *ātmavān* or *ātmarati* :

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ (III. 17).
त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ (II. 45).

"But the man who rejoiceth in the Self, is satisfied with the Self, and is content in the Self, for him verily there is nothing to do" (III. 17).

"The Vedas deal with the three *guṇas*; be thou above these three *guṇas*, beyond the pairs of opposites, ever steadfast in purity, careless of possessions, full of the Self" (II. 45).

There is no hindrance to the realization of a man's rational self; the hindrance is only himself.

"Raise the self by the Self and do not let the self become depressed; for verily is the Self the friend of the self and the self the enemy of the self" (VI. 5).

Man is free to raise himself to the level of absolute rationality. When he reaches that level he becomes one with God :

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥ (IV. 24).

This condition is elsewhere stated as the condition of *Brahmanirvāṇa* (II. 72, V. 24, V. 25), or of *Brahmabhūtya* (XIV. 26, XVIII. 53). The man who reaches this condition is given various appellations. He is called *Brahmaṇi Sthita* (V. 20), *Brahmayogayuktātmā* (V.21), *Brahmabhūta* (V. 24), *Yuktatama* (VI. 47), *Me priya* (XII. 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20).

If the question is asked: Does the Gītā, however, give man freedom to choose the good as well as the evil, that is to say, what Sidgwick has called 'neutral freedom'?, the answer is: Undoubtedly it does. This is clear from VI.5 and also VI.6, where it is said that a man can act in a way in which his self is his friend or can act in a way in which his self is his enemy, that is, can raise himself as well as lower himself. The cause of wrong doing is thus clearly stated in the Gītā:

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ (III. 37).

—"It is desire, it is wrath, begotten by the *rajas* quality, all-consuming, all-polluting, know this as our foe here on earth." It is undoubtedly open to a man to allow this desire to get the mastery over him, as it is open to him to curb

it. If he pursues the former course, then he chooses evil, if the latter, then he chooses the good.

Again it is stated in the sixteenth chapter that there are two fundamentally distinct types of qualities in man: *daivī* and *āsurī*. The *daivī* properties lead to salvation, the *āsuri* to bondage. Although these properties are mentioned as the characteristics of two different types of man, it is not the object of the Gītā to assert that the man with one set of properties can never get rid of them and acquire the other type. On the other hand, the twenty-first verse of the sixteenth chapter clearly indicates that it is possible for every man to get rid of the three evil propensies,—lust, wrath and greed, which are the three gates of hell.

The Gītā undoubtedly believes that it is open to everybody either to take the path of virtue or the path of vice. If this were not so, the purpose of the Gītā would be completely frustrated. For its object undoubtedly was to give instruction to Arjuna about what his duty was in the difficult situation in which he was placed, so as to dissuade him from following the path of his natural impulses leading to inaction. It believes, therefore, in the possibility of a man

changing his course of action as a result of receiving moral instruction and adopting the right method of self-improvement. No matter how low and debased a person's moral condition may be, there is still chance for him or her to improve this condition. This is the substance of IX. 32:—

"मा हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः" etc.

It states, in a manner which leaves no room for doubt, that there is no human being but has a chance of improving his or her condition and obtaining salvation. The Gītā does not believe in eternal perdition. If you remain in the slums of morality, it is not the fault of your stars, but *it is the fault of yourself.*

The Gītā undoubtedly does not regard human beings as the ultimate authors of their destiny. It cannot do so without relegating God to a position of relative inferiority *vis a vis* human beings. When, therefore, the Gītā says in the eighteenth chapter:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूताना हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥ (XVIII. 61),

it is not meant that human beings enjoy no freedom. It is only asserted that their consciousness of their own freedom should not make them lose sight of the position of God as the ultimate Controller and Director of everything. The Gītā

does not believe in a God who has abdicated His functions The Gitā has called God

"उपद्रष्टाऽनुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वर"

(XIII 23) So it has called Him

"जगतो माता धाता पितामह"

(IX 17), and also

"गतिर्भर्ता प्रभु साक्षी निवास शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभव प्रलय स्थान निधान बीजमव्ययम्"॥ (IX 18)

It does not believe in an inane God who has renounced all powers and is merely a benevolent spectator

Moreover, if we look to the context of this verse (XVIII 61), quoted above, we shall find that immediately before this we have in verses 58 and 59 a warning given to Arjuna that if he persists in his self conceit, he will be crushed or compelled to give up his conceit

"Thinking on Me, thou shalt overcome all obstacles by My grace, but if from egoism thou wilt not listen, thou shalt be destroyed utterly"

"Entrenched in egoism, thou thinkest, 'I will not fight', to no purpose is thy determination, thy nature will constrain thee" (XVIII 58-59)"

These verses, in fact, express in more caustic terms the rebuke already administered to Arjuna in II 11

"Thou hast been mourning for them who should not be mourned for. Yet thou speakest words of wisdom."

It is clear, therefore, that verses 58, 59 and 61 of the eighteenth chapter have for their object the removal of the conceit from Arjuna's mind, the conceit, namely, that he alone was competent to decide what his duty would be. These verses, therefore, in no way go against human freedom. They only assert the objective character of the moral judgment and the subordination of the individual judgment to the objective judgment of morality. God, as representing this objective judgment, has a coercive power over the individual.

But the beauty of the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gītā is that this coercion is felt only when the individual, due to ignorance or the perversity of the will*, pursues a course which is contrary to the moral order of the universe. When the individual shakes off this ignorance or is cured of his moral perversity, then he is willing to submit himself to the guidance of God. He finds

* The Gītā, strictly speaking, does not make any difference between the will and the intellect. Defect of the will, the Gītā has repeatedly declared, is due to the defect of the intellect and *vice versa*. See III. 38-40, V, 15-16. See also IV. 42.

therein his true realisation and final salvation, and therefore, ungrudgingly, of his own free will, resigns himself unto God This is the case with Arjuna himself, when at the end of his instruction he voluntarily resigns himself unto the Lord, saying .

"Destroyed is my delusion. I have gained knowledge through Thy grace, O Immutable One I am firm, my doubts have been removed. I will do according to Thy word" (XVIII. 73).

There are, however, two verses in the eleventh chapter, which seem to suggest a kind of fatalism more destructive of human freedom than even the verses of the eighteenth chapter we have examined above. These verses are:

"Therefore stand up! Win for thyself renown,
Conquer they foes, enjoy the wealth-filled realm
By Me they are already overcome,
Be thou the instrumental cause, left-handed one.
Drona and Bhīsma and Jayadratha,
Karna and all the other warriors here,
Are slain by Me. Destroy them fearlessly.
Fight! thou shalt crush thy rivals in the field"
(XI 33-34)

They seem to suggest that man is really powerless to do anything, everything being in reality done by God Himself. Here we meet with a very

familiar problem in philosophy, the problem of reconciling the omnipotence of God with human freedom. This problem has presented itself to Spinoza also. Spinoza says in Prop. XLV of the second Part of his *Ethics* :

"Prop. XLV. Every idea of anybody or actually existing individual thing necessarily involves the eternal and infinite essence of God.

Demonstr. The idea of an individual thing actually existing necessarily involves both the essence and existence of the thing itself. But individual things cannot be conceived with God, and since God is their cause in so far as He is considered under that attribute of which they are modes, their ideas must necessarily involve the conception of that attribute, or, in other words, must involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.

Scholium. By existence is to be understood here not duration, that is, existence considered in the abstract, as if it were a certain kind of quantity, but I speak of the nature itself of the existence which is assigned to individual things, because from the eternal necessity of the nature of God infinite numbers of things, follow in infinite ways. I repeat that I speak of the existence itself of individual things in so far as they are in God.

For although each individual thing is determined by another individual thing to existence in a certain way, the force nevertheless by which each thing perseveres in its existence follows from the eternal necessity of the nature of God" (Spinoza's *Ethics* Oxford Edition, p 92 Tr by W Hale White and Amelia H Stirling)

From this it is quite clear that according to Spinoza, every idea of any human being (and consequently, also every act of every human being, for according to Spinoza, will and idea are identical) is dependent upon the eternal and infinite essence of God, and therefore, upon His will Yet Caird has shown that this does not imply that human beings have no freedom "When we ask," says Caird, "what in his system is the relation of the finite world and individual finite things to God, the question is not settled simply by referring to his doctrine that all things exist in God, and that modes or finite things have no existence or operation independently of the infinite substance Spinozism in not at once proved to be pantheistic by such expressions as these For every system that is not dualistic, and for which the terms infinite and finite have any meaning, is pantheistic to the extent of holding that the world has

no absolute or independent existence, and that the ultimate explanation of all things is to be found in God Before pronouncing Spinoza a pantheist, therefore, the point to be determined is not whether he ascribes independent reality to finite things, but whether he ascribes to them any reality at all" (Caird, *Spinoza*, Blackwood's Philosophical Classics, pp 161 62)

In the light of the above remarks of Caird, it is clear that merely because the Gītā calls human beings 'instrumental causes,' it cannot be said that it wants to say that they have no freedom. Human beings undoubtedly cannot be regarded as the ultimate causes of things if the supremacy of God is to be maintained There cannot be two ultimate causes If man is made absolutely independent of God in his thoughts as well as in his actions, then the position of God is bound to suffer, as is the case with the philosophy of Leibniz

Let us face the question squarely What exactly is meant when it is claimed that human beings are free? Is it meant that they enjoy absolute freedom even when they are limited, particular, individual beings? That is, of course, ridiculous, for it involves a contradiction in terms All that can be claimed is that these finite

individuals must be given a chance of being other than they are and of acting otherwise than they do, that is, of being other than merefinite, individual, particular beings and of acting otherwise than in a way contrary to the objective moral order. In other words, what can be claimed is that every finite individual must have freedom to improve himself, to rise above his limitations and ultimately to be one with God Himself. This freedom no one can assert that the Gītā denies. The words of verse 32 of the ninth chapter are explicit on this point: "Everybody who takes refuge in me attains the supreme condition." Nobody is doomed for ever. The Gītā does not prescribe eternal hell fire for anybody. Everybody can improve his or her moral condition, and ultimately attain oneness with God and salvation. There is no coercion on the part of God to tie down any individual to his or her particular lot for ever. The greatest feature of the Gītā is its triumphant optimism. There is perhaps no work extant in any literature which gives more hope to the weak and the fallen than the Gītā. And its catholicity is really something marvellous. It offers salvation to followers of all creeds and faiths:

"Any devotee who seeketh to worship with

faith any such aspect, I verily bestow upon him his unswerving faith."

"He, endowed with that faith, seeketh the worship of such a one, and from him he obtaineth his desires, I verily decreeing the benefits."

"Finite indeed is the fruit that belongeth to those who are of small intelligence. To the Devas go the worshippers of the Devas, but my devotees come unto Me" (VII. 21-23).

Moreover, is it natural for a man to feel 'cribbed, cabined and confined' when he is 'in tune with the infinite'? Does it not rather show a perverse mentality? Can there be any greater freedom for any individual than to be united with God?

Here also Spinoza comes to our aid. In reply to his correspondent Blyenbergh, who objects to Spinoza's statement that a man is never more free than when he conceives things under their eternal forms, on the ground that it makes men no better than stones, Spinoza says: "As to what you say, that I make men so dependent on God that I make them like the elements, plants and stones, this shows sufficiently that you most perversely misunderstand my opinion, and confuse things which concern the understanding with imagination. For if you had grasped with

your pure understanding what dependence upon God is, you would certainly not think that things, in so far as they depend on God, are dead, corporeal and imperfect (who even dared to speak in so vile a fashion of the most perfect Being?). On the contrary, you would understand that for that reason, and in so far as they depend on God, they are perfect—so much so, that we best understand this dependence and necessary operation through God's decree when we consider not logs and plants but the most intelligible and most perfect created things, as appears clearly from what I have said before, in the second place, about the meaning of Descartes which you should have noticed." (Letter No. 21 Blyenbergh, Vide *Correspondence of Spinoza*, edited by Wolf, p. 178).

The Gītā, therefore, triumphantly declares:

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मा नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

(XVIII, 65)

This is the highest freedom.

THE SĀDHANĀ OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ**

The *Bhagavadgītā* is essentially a book of Sādhanā or way to realization. It is not a book of Jñāna, or Karma, or Bhakti, though it treats of all these from the point of view of realization.

THE GĪTĀ IS A YOGAŚĀSTRA:

MEANING OF THE WORD 'YOGA'

The *Bhagavadgītā*, in fact, is a Yogaśāstra. Every chapter of it ends with the words, '*Iti sri Bhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu Brahmavidyāyām Yogaśāstre sri Kriṣnārjunasaṃvāde* . . . . . *Yogo nāma* . . . . . *adhyāyaḥ*. Every chapter is called a Yoga. Thus, we have *Arjunaviṣādayoga*, *Sāṃkhyayoga*, *Karmayoga*, etc., as the names of the different chapters.

What, however, is meant by the word 'Yoga'? Mr. D. S. Sharma in his *Introduction to the Bhagavadgītā* defines Yoga as fellowship with God. Sri Krishna Prem also similarly says (*Vide The Yoga of the Bhagavadgītā*, p. xiv), 'By yoga is here meant

**Reprinted from "The Vedanta Kesari," Sept. and Oct. 1940.

not any special system called by that name, not Jñānayoga, nor Karmayoga, nor Bhaktiyoga, nor the eight-fold Yoga of Patanjali, but just the Path by which man unites his finite self with Infinite Being.'

Yoga, therefore, means union with God. But union with God implies three things: (*a*) union with oneself, leading to the realization of the individual self, (*b*) union with the Cosmos, leading to the realization of the Cosmic Self, and (*c*) union of the two unions, leading to full self-realization or God-realization. The different Yogas dealt with in the *Gītā* may thus be broadly classed under three heads: (1) those whose object is the realization of the individual self, (2) those whose object is the realization of the Cosmic Self, and (3) those which have for their object complete self-realization or God-realization. One thing, however, should be clearly understood at the very beginning. Although for convenience of exposition, we may classify the Yogas under the above three heads, yet we must never forget that the *Gītā* does not believe in piecemeal realization. The *Gītā* looks upon realization as one whole, and does not think it possible to divide it as we have done for purposes of exposition. No realization is possible unless one goes through the whole of the

eighteen Sādhanās described in the eighteen chapters.

SOME PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

(a) WHOSE IS THE REALIZATION SPOKEN OF IN THE GĪTĀ?

Before we come to the subject of realization proper, there are two preliminary questions which we must discuss. The first is: Whose is the realization spoken of in the *Gītā*? Is it the realization of a normal human being or of a supernormal, enlightened being? This question is of fundamental importance, for if the *Gītā* discussed only the realization proper to an advanced soul, it would be a technical book, of interest only to a favoured few. If, however, it dealt with the realization of a normal human being, it would be of interest to all normally constituted human beings.

The *Gītā* describes the realization vouchsafed to Arjuna. Who is Arjuna? Is he only a normal human being, or is he a supernaturally gifted, enlightened soul? Arjuna, of course, is a Ksatriya and belongs to a very noble house, namely, the lunar royal house. He has also received education proper to a Ksatriya, and has, in addition, had instruction in military science

from a veteran teacher, like the great Droṇācārya. But he has had no instruction in Adhyātmavidyā or the science of the Self. He has had no training in spiritual matters Nor does he show any particular aptitude for these. He is superstitious, he sees omens (*Nimittani ca paśyāmi viparītāni Keśava*, i: 31). He is highly emotional. Seeing his own kinsmen and relations arrayed against him, his body trembles, his limbs get paralysed, and his bow slips from his hand (i: 29, 30). These things do not suggest any great spiritual advancement; rather they suggest the reverse. His decision to give up the fight is also not due to any high moral principles. It is not due, as some people seem to believe, to his faith in Ahiṃsā. It is simply due to emotions getting the better of his reason. The arguments which he advances are extremely specious, and he therefore well deserves the taunting remark of Lord Kṛṣṇa, 'You speak words of wisdom!' (ii: 11). He himself admits that his will has become weak, his mind has become puzzled, and he does not know what his duty is (ii: 7). It is impossible, therefore, to contend that Arjuna's refusal to fight was actuated by the highest motives. Mr. D. S. Sharma, in his book already referred to, has very well expressed the hollowness of such a contention.

I maintain, therefore, that Arjuna is nothing more than a normal human being. Of course, he is a good subject for instruction; otherwise the Divine Teacher would not have accepted him as the vehicle for his teachings. He possesses also humility, although this humility is still touched with egotism. (Witness the words '*na yotsye*' occurring almost immediately after the words '*Śiṣyas te 'ham śādhi mam tvāṃ prapannam*'). But he is certainly not an enlightened soul or one that is spiritually advanced. What he achieves therefore in the realm of spiritual realization is possible for every normal human being, provided he is sufficiently earnest about it. It is also not true that it is Brāhmanas and Kṣatriyas only that can profit by the instruction communicated to Arjuna. The *Gītā* is very catholic. For instance, it states towards the close of its teaching:

> श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
> सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥

Of course, a man, in order to profit by this instruction, should possess faith. But that is the condition necessary for all instruction. No man can profit by any instruction if he takes it in a carping spirit. The *Gītā* nowhere says that it is only privileged beings or persons belonging

to the higher castes who can benefit by its teaching. Here is the secret of its extraordinary hold upon the minds of men and women of all ranks and conditions.

(*b*) WHAT IS THE 'ANSTOSS' THAT RELEASES THE TEACHING OF THE GĪTĀ?

The next question which we have to tackle before we can come to our real subject is: What is the *Anstoss* or shock that releases the teaching of the *Gītā*? For there must be some *Anstoss*, some experience that shakes one's whole Being, which throws a man into that condition in which he feels the need for spiritual advancement. All spiritual progress starts from some crisis, some catastrophic experience which shakes to its very foundations the moral being of man. What is this crisis as depicted in the *Gītā*? The crisis is clearly described in the first chapter, as well as in verses 4 to 8 of the second chapter. It is conflict in Arjuna between sentiment and duty. A true picture of Arjuna's mental state is given in verses 29 and 30 of the first chapter, already referred to above. Arjuna speaks there of his limbs being paralysed and his mouth being parched, his hair standing on end, and his bow involuntarily falling from his hand—characteristics which point

to excessive emotionalism leading to a paralysis of the will. *It is not a very uncommon experience.* Many of us have this kind of experience as a result of fright or grief. In Arjuna's case this condition was brought about by the sight of so many near and dear relations of his (as mentioned in I. 26 and 27) whom he might have to kill in case he engaged in the fight. But this by itself would not have caused a crisis. The crisis is due to the fact that Arjuna has also a dim perception of the fact that it is his duty to fight. This idea of duty is working in his subconscious mind and forces him to put forward opposite reasons to counteract its effect. These are really the mask which his emotions wear in order to hide their real character. Readers who have any acquaintance with the works of Freud and his disciples are too well aware of this device, which emotions have of hiding their true character, to be reminded of it. The mask is almost removed and the true situation revealed in verse 46, where he says, 'If the sons of Dhṛtarāṣtra, weapon in hand, should slay me, unarmed, in the battle, that would for me be better.' No man in possession of his reason can talk like this. It is the utterance of a man whose reason is entirely overcome by emotions. The crisis is therefore

the conflict between emotion and a vague conception of duty working in the subconscious mind.

Why, however, is this crisis called a Yoga? Why is this condition of Arjuna called *arjunaviṣādayoga*? It seems at first sight to be the very reverse of a Yoga. It is, no doubt, true that Arjuna's mind is quite distracted, but the distraction is the first step to realization, and hence it is most appropriately called a Yoga. Here the author of the *Gītā* shows his wonderful knowledge of the psychology of spiritual realization. In the lives of many saints and founders of religions, we read of similar dejections and mental catastrophes which started them on the path of realization. Thus, for instance, the sight of disease, decrepitude, and death, caused a shock in the mind of the Buddha which led him to renounce a kingdom and lead a wandering life in search of truth. Even in the lives of ordinary mortals, a great shock in the shape of disappointment or grief is very often the starting-point of a new spiritual life. The *viṣāda* of Arjuna, therefore, is rightly called a Yoga, although it does not possess all the characteristics of a Yoga.

THE YOGA OF THE GĪTĀ: FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS

Coming now to the question of the Yoga of the *Bhagavadgītā*, we find that the *Gītā* mentions certain universal characteristics (which we may call the formal characteristics) of Yoga. Every Yoga, no matter of what kind, must possess these characteristics. The only exception is the first Yoga, *arjunaviṣādayoga*, which, as we have already seen, does not possess these characteristics, but is called Yoga for special reasons.

These formal characteristics of every Yoga have been stated in various ways in different chapters of the *Gītā*, and even in the same chapter they have been described in different ways. In the main, they are: disregard of the fruit of action (ii: 47, iv: 29, v: 12), non-attachment to objects (ii: 48, iii: 19), balance or mental equipoise (*samatva*, ii: 48), desirelessness (iv: 19), indifference to pleasure and pain, to loss or gain (ii: 38), indifference to heat and cold, honour and dishonour (vi: 7 and xii: 18), impartiality to friends and foes, neutrals, strangers, and relations (vi: 9). These negative characteristics may be summed up in one word: non-attachment to objects. In addition to these negative characteristics, every Yoga shows some positive features which

Unlike Kant, however, who gives only the formal characteristics of the moral law, the *Gītā* gives, in addition to the formal characteristics, what we may call the material characteristics peculiar to every Yoga. As Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri rightly observes, (Vide *Problems of the Bhagavadgītā*, p. 39), "it is clear that while self-control, purity, renunciation of desire, love to all, absence of egoism, absence of sense of possession, sameness in relation to heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, etc., are common to all the Yogas, Karmayoga stresses Karma, Rājayoga stresses Dhyāna, Bhaktiyoga stresses Bhakti, and Jñānayoga stresses Jñāna." Every Yoga has got a definite positive content which defines its goal. Thus, Karmayoga has got for its definite goal *lokasaṃgraha*, welfare of all the *lokas* (people), Jnānayoga has for its object the knowledge that 'Vāsudeva is all.' So also Sāṃkhyayoga has for its end *Brāhmī sthiti* (ii : 72), Rājayoga or Dhyānayoga the 'enjoyment of the infinite bliss of contact with Brahman' (vi : 28). Similarly, the Viśvarūpayoga has for its object the vision of the Cosmic Form of God, and Bhaktiyoga the attainment of the condition of being 'very dear to God' (xii : 20). In this

way, every Yoga, in addition to its purely formal characteristics, has got a definite positive content.

DOES THE GĪTĀ TEACH ANY PARTICULAR YOGA, OR DOES IT GIVE EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO ALL THE DIFFERENT YOGAS?

The question we have next to ask is: Is it the object of the *Gītā* to expound any particular Yoga, such as Karmayoga, or Jñānayoga, or Bhaktiyoga, or does it attach equal importance to all the different Yogas? This question has given rise to most of the controversies relating to the *Gītā*. The great Ācāryas looked upon the *Gītā* as preaching either the gospel of Knowledge or the gospel of Bhakti, whereas the late Lokamanya Tilak looked upon the *Gītā* as expounding only the doctrine of Karmayoga. It is not possible to go into the details of this controversy within the limited space at my disposal. But I may offer one or two considerations which go against the view that the *Gītā*'s object is to expound one particular Yoga and to treat others either as leading to, or as subordinate to, this single Yoga. The first thing that I want to say is that such a view does not at all explain

why the *Gita* should give so much space to the discussion of the other kinds of Yogas It would have sufficed to elaborate fully the central Yoga and simply to point out that all the other Yogas are only ancillary to it, or are ultimately merged in it But the *Gita* has never done it It is true that it has occasionally expressed the equivalence of different methods of realization For instance, in v 4 and 5 it expressly states that Sāmkhya and Yoga are one and the same and equally lead to the same goal In v 2, moreover, *karmayoga* is pronounced to be better than *karmasannyasa*, which is the path of *samkhya* But here we should note carefully the context in which these statements occur They are an answer to Arjuna's question 'Renunciation of action you praise, O Kṛsna, and then also Yoga Of the two, which one is the better? Tell me that conclusively' (v 1) Really speaking, in the previous chapter, that is, the fourth chapter, renunciation of action was not advocated This is clear from the last two verses of that chapter which sum up the teaching of that chapter

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥
तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनाऽऽत्मनः ।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ IV 41 42

These verses leave no room for doubt that the *Gītā* does not advocate renunciation of action. The words, '*ātmavantam na karmāṇi nibadhnanti*' would in fact, lose all their meaning if the verses had for their object the preaching of the doctrine of renunciation of action. But still, as the late Lokamanya Tilak suggested, the *Gītā* felt that there might be some doubt in the minds of men about the *true* meaning of the teaching of the previous chapter And this doubt was expressed through the mouth of Arjuna, and the *Gītā* in the fifth chapter states its own point of view in unmistakable terms so as to remove all possibility of doubt.

Why does the *Gītā* however, say, '*sannyāsaḥ karmayogaś ca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau*'? Its own view is not that renunciation of action leads to emancipation; on the contrary, it asserts definitely in iii: 4 that realization cannot be obtained by renunciation of work. The reason why the *Gītā*, in spite of its clearly stated view on the question, asserts that *sannyāsa* and *karmayoga* both lead to emancipation is probably that, as stated in iii: 3, the Lord Himself said at the beginning of creation[1] that there are two paths leading to salva-

[1] The late Lokamanya Tilak gave two meanings of the word *purā* in this verse. These two meanings are,

tion, namely, the path of knowledge practised by the Sāmkhyists (involving renunciation of action) and the path of Karmayoga practised by the Yogins The *Gita* has accepted this view stated by the Lord at the time of creation in a completely changed form, for it does not value the *sannyasa* which consists in renunciation of action, but the other type of *sannyasa* which consists in the renunciation of the fruits of action. It has given a new definition of *sannyasa* 'The sages have known as sannyāsa the renunciation of work prompted by desire' (xvii. 2), and has given a new definition of a *sannyāsin* 'He who performs such action as is his duty, irrespective of the fruit of action, is a *sannyasin*, a *yogin*, not he that is without fire or without rites' (vi 1)

Moreover the object of the *Gītā* in stating in v 4 and 5 that *samkhya* and *yoga* are one and the same is not to indicate that the one can be resolved into the other, but to show that there is no opposition between the two In fact,

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respectively, 'at the beginning of creation' (as described in Mbh San 340 and 347) and 'as described in the previous chapter' He himself prefers the latter sense I take the word, however, in the former sense, because Lord Kṛṣṇa did not advocate the doctrine of the renunciation of action in the previous chapter The Samkhyayoga which he preached in it is not the doctrine of renunciation of work but of the fruit of work

it is one of the chief merits of the *Gītā* that it harmonizes the two very nicely with the help of its conception of Yoga. The Sāṃkhya that was without action is transformed by the *Gītā* into the *sāṃkhyayoga* that advocates action, and the Karma that was based upon desire is transformed into the *Karmayoga* that is based upon desirelessness. So again, the Sannyāsa that meant renunciation of action is changed into the Sannyās ayoga that means renunciation of the fruits of action. In this way, with the help of its conception of Yoga, the *Gītā* retains the essential elements in *sāṃkhya*, *karma*, and *sannyāsa*, and at the same time avoids those elements which produce a conflict between those paths.

I therefore hold that the *Gītā* does not advocate any particular Yoga to the exclusion of all others, nor does it believe in any opposition between one Yoga and another. There is also a meaning in the order in which the different Yogas are presented; the order represents the natural stages in the gradual advance to complete self-realization. Thus, the Sāṃkhyayoga taught in the second chapter leads naturally to the Karmayoga of the third chapter, and the latter in its turn to the Jnānavibhāgayoga of the fourth chapter. The teaching of the fourth chapter inevitably

raises the question of the relation between *sannyasa* and *karma*, and this is the subject matter of the fifth chapter which is named Sannyasayoga The relations between *karma*, *jnana*, and *sannyasa* being thus established, the next question that arises is one concerning the nature of realization through *dhyana* or meditation, and this is the theme of the sixth chapter, which is therefore properly named Dhyanayoga or Rājayoga This finishes the Yogas that deal mainly with the realization of the individual self Then come those Yogas which treat of the realization of the Cosmic Self These form the subject matter of Chapters VII-XII And lastly, come those Yogas which have for their subject matter the unity of the two realizations, that is, complete self realization or God realization These constitute the theme of the last six chapters of the *Gita*

FIRST DIVISION OF THE YOGAS YOGAS RELATING TO THE REALIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL SELF

As I have indicated above, the principle of classification that will be followed in this article is the nature of realization In accordance with this principle, the first class of Yogas deals with the realization of the individual self Of course, as I have stated at the outset, there is no realization

which is purely individual, every realization bringing with it all the three types of realization But the first six chapters may be broadly said to be concerned with the subject of the realization of the individual self The chief thing that stands in the way of the realization of the individual self is the presence of conflict in the individual I have shown these conflicts very fully in the third essay, and I need not therefore discuss the matter in detail here The conflicts which divide the individual are not resolved until we reach the sixth chapter, where with the help of Rājayoga or Dhyānayoga, the divided individual is able to realize his integral personality And here I would like to stress the point which I have pointed out in the article referred to above, namely, that a full realization of the individual's complete personality is not possible until we come to the last chapter where Arjuna is able to say that all his delusions are gone and he is in a position to do the Lord's bidding (xviii 73)

SECOND DIVISION OF THE YOGAS YOGAS DEALING WITH THE REALIZATION OF THE COSMIC SELF

So far we have dealt with the first step in realization The next step in realization, the

ascent from the individual self to that of the Cosmic Self, I have described in detail in the second essay and I need therefore give here only the briefest outline of the process. The ascent to this realization begins from the seventh chapter, and it is in this chapter that the teaching of the *Gītā* takes a distinctly cosmic turn. The individual is here for the first time brought into relationship with the Cosmic Reality. The distinction between Parā Prakṛti and Aparā Prakṛti is also made in this chapter, and Parā Prakṛti is defined as '*jīvabhūta*,' '*yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat*.' This definition of Parā Prakṛti is significant, because it brings into clear relief the relation between the higher Nature of God and the individual self, and thus makes it possible for the latter to seek God-realization.

In the eighth chapter the cosmic significance of Karma is clearly stated in the third verse, which may consequently be regarded as one of the basic verses of the *Gītā*. The chapter proceeds to describe the Cosmic destiny of the individual, and this theme is continued in the next chapter. In the ninth chapter there occur also those famous verses which describe the nature of God. These verses bring out both the transcendent and the immanent character of God, though they emphasize

the former more than the latter. This is natural, for the object of this chapter is to present God in His cosmic aspect. In the tenth chapter, which is characteristically called Vibhūtiyoga, the cosmic aspect of God is most strongly emphasized. The chapter stresses the trans-human, cosmic character of God, as will be evident from the following verses:

> न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
> अहमादिर्हि देवाना महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥
> योमामजमनादि च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
> असम्मूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ X : 2-3

As Sri Krishna Prem puts it, "It is thus not a person who is speaking in the *Gītā* but the great Brahman out of which all beings come and into which all will in time return"[2]. His transcendence is indeed so great that Arjuna is constrained to say: *Na hi te bhagavan vyaktiṃ vidur deva na dānavāḥ* (X: 14).

But it is in the eleventh chapter that the transcendent character reaches its culmination and the stupendous grandeur and infinite greatness of God are fully revealed. The revelation is so awe-inspiring that Arjuna literally shakes with fear and begs the Lord to resume His human

[2] Vide *The Yoga of the Bhagavadgītā* p. 91.

form (XI : 45). He recovers his composure only when God assumes again His human form (XI : 51)

The twelfth chapter, as I have shown, in the second essay, is also needed to complete the ascent to the Cosmic Self. Bhakti is the only attitude possible to a being who has had vision of the Cosmic Form of the Lord. Bhaktiyoga, therefore, is a necessary complement to Visvarūpayoga.

This finishes the Yogas relating to the ascent of the soul. Arjuna has now got a glimpse of the greatness and infinite power of God. But he is dazzled by this vision and he loses his bearings. What is needed, therefore, is a link between the Godhead in Its infinite majesty and the individual in his insignificance. As Sri Aurobindo puts it: "The infinite presence in its unmitigated splendour would be too overwhelming for the separate littleness of the limited, individual and natural man. A link is needed by which he can see this universal Godhead in his own individual and natural being, close to him, not only omnipotently there to govern all he is by universal and immeasurable Power, but humanly figured to support and raise him to unity by an intimate and individual relation."[3] This link is supplied by Lord Kṛṣṇa assuming the human form

[3] *Essays on the Gita*, 2nd Series, 2nd edn., pp. 173-74.

THIRD DIVISION OF THE YOGAS: YOGAS RELATING TO THE UNITY OF THE TWO PREVIOUS REALIZATIONS: COMPLETE SELF-REALIZATION OR GOD-REALIZATION

We now come to the last division of the *Gītā* which deals with the highest kind of realization—the unity of the two previous realizations, resulting in complete self-realization or God-realization. We have just seen the necessity of God assuming the human form in order to establish a link between God and man. But this is not enough. It is further necessary that man after realizing the Cosmic Form of God should descend to the world and view his duties in the worldly plane in the light of this realization. In other words, what is needed is that man should maintain his continuity with the Infinite Self and realize the latter as his true self. How he is to do this is the theme of the last six chapters.

It is clear that there will be a good of knowledge in the last six chapters. This is, perhaps, the reason why it is generally believed that these chapters deal with knowledge. But it should be remembered that the knowledge spoken of here is different from the knowledge as depicted in the seventh chapter. There the knowledge that is described is a purely theoretical one, namely, that 'Vāsudeva is all.' Here the

knowledge that is communicated has an eye to two things. First, it shows how the self stands in relation to the world, and secondly, how it stands in relation to God.

This double standpoint we notice clearly in Chapter XIII If we examine the characteristics of knowledge as given in verses 8 to 12, we find such characteristics as humility, unpretentiousness, harmlessness, forgiveness, rectitude, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, etc. These qualities we usually look upon as moral qualities rather than as qualities of knowledge, and from this it is evident that the *Gītā* here views knowledge not merely from the theoretical point of view, but also from the practical point of view, from the point of view, that is, of the relation of the self to the world. From this point of view it is very significant that the title of the chapter is Kṣetrakṣetrajñayoga. The relation between the self and the world is that of the field (Kṣetra) and the knower of the field (Kṣetrajña). What, however, is the field? From the description of the field as given in verses 5 and 6, it appears that it comprises not merely what is physical, but the whole of our sensuous, intellectual, and emotional nature. In fact, the field is the totality of

the physical, vital, and mental regions The self is the knower of this field It is not itself one of the objects which constitute the field. The *Gītā* stresses here, as Kant did later, the fact that the self is a subject and not a substance This conception of self brings out the unity of the individual self with the Cosmic Self, for the latter differs from the former only in being 'the knower of all the fields' So, as Sri Krishna Prem has pointed out, the teaching of this chapter may be summed up by the words. 'Within you is the light of the world'

The barrier thus breaks down completely between the self and God The nature of self defines the nature of God The chapter, therefore, most naturally passes from the nature of self to the nature of God Those remarkably beautiful verses (xiii 28-34) which depict the nature of the self depict also the nature of God

But although the nature of the self is sufficiently well described in the thirteenth chapter, yet something more is necessary than the *kṣetra-kṣetrajña* relationship to indicate the attitude of the self towards the world This is the necessity for the teaching imparted in the fourteenth chapter, which is characteristically named Gunatrayavibhagayoga There are three quali-

ties, the *Gita* says, namely *sattva*,[4] *rajas*, and *tamas* which originate from Prakṛti and which bind fast the soul which dwells in the body (xiv 5) Of these, *sattva*, on account of its purity, is illuminating and healthy (or untroubling, as Śridhara interprets the word *mamayam*), and causes bondage through attachment to pleasure and knowledge The quality of *rajas* arises from desire and attachment and causes bondage by attachment to action *Tamas*, born of ignorance, is the deluder of all dwellers in the body and binds through heedlessness, indolence, and sloth (xiv 6-8) The *Gitā* further says (xviii 40) that there is no entity, either on earth, or in heaven among the Devas, which is free from these three *gunas* It is these three *gunas* which cause bondage Unless, therefore, a man can rise above the three *gunas*, he cannot escape from the bondage of the world The instruction, therefore, which the fourteenth chapter imparts is Be above the three *gunas* This seems to be the same as the advice given in ii 45 ('*nistraiguṇyo*

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[4]As I have already shown, the *Gita's* view of the *gunas* differs in essential respects from that of the orthodox Saṃkhya For one thing, the latter does not regard the *gunas* as originating from Prakṛti, but as constituting Prakṛti Secondly, the orthodox Samkhya looks upon the *guṇas* as constituent elements of Prakṛti and not as attributes or qualities

bhavārjuna'); but there is this difference, that in the earlier chapter there is no discussion about the *guṇas*. This difference, in fact, is what we notice throughout when we compare the instruction given in the last six chapters with that given earlier. Although at first sight it may seem that the instruction in the later chapters is in many respects the same as that given in the earlier chapters, yet it is always richer and more concrete, as it proceeds from an analysis of the nature of the self as well as of the universe.

The discussion of the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters relating to the nature of the self and its relation to the world is a fitting prelude to the topic discussed in the fifteenth chapter, the conception of Purusottama. The concep-conception of Purusottama is the *Gītā's* highest conception of God. There are various misconceptions relating to the *Gītā's* view of Puruṣottama, against which it is necessary to be on our guard. Thus, the late Lokamanya Tilak regarded Puruṣottama as the same as Akṣara Brahman. The reviewer in the *Modern Review* (the late Mr. M. C. Ghosh), while reviewing Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, took Sri Aurobindo to task because he took the teaching of the fifteenth chapter seriously, since in the opinion of the

reviewer the fifteenth chapter must be considered spurious, as there could not be any Puruṣottama higher than Akṣara Brahman. Such a criticism will remind one of similar views expressed by Greek scholars of the last century who regarded the 'Parmenides' and the 'Laws' of Plato as spurious.

There can be absolutely no doubt that the conception of Puruṣottama is different from that of Aksara Brahman. The *Gītā* itself states in unmistakable terms in xv. 18 the difference between the two. The conception of Puruṣottama crowns the whole teaching of the *Gītā*, without which it will not be complete.

The fifteenth chapter begins with a magnificent simile. The universe is compared to a giant Aśvattha tree which has its roots upwards and its branches downwards. The root which is located above is God, and the branches which move downwards are rooted to the ground by means of the knots of Karma. The whole illustration is no doubt taken from the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (ii: 6. 1), but the *Gītā* has added certain features of its own. For in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* nothing is said about the branches reaching the ground and causing bondage through Karma. Nor is anything stated there about the necessity

of cutting the lower branches with the sword of non-attachment.

This simile illustrates very well the *Gītā's* conception of God. God is the transcendent source of the world. But the world is not unreal; on the contrary, it is the real manifestation of God. Bondage is due to attachment to the world. If this attachment is destroyed by doing work in a spirit of absolute detachment, the nature of the Divine Personality will be revealed to us.

God in the *Gītā* is not an abstract God. In the twelfth chapter the *Gītā* has unmistakably shown its preference for the concrete conception of God. The worship of the Akṣara and the Avyakta is pronounced to be very difficult and not worth pursuing, when there is the easier method of worship of the Personal (or rather Superpersonal) God.

It is true that the *Gītā* has mixed up always the deistic, pantheistic, and theistic conceptions of God. In the brilliant verses depicting the nature of God in the ninth chapter (verses 17-19), as also in those remarkably fine verses in the thirteenth chapter (13-18 and 23), on the same subject, we have a curious blending of the transcendent and immanent conceptions of God. But, as Dr. S. N.

Dasgupta has clearly pointed out, in spite of these conflicting views about the nature of the Supreme Being, there is one central idea towards which the whole of the *Gītā* teaching moves It is the idea of a Superpersonal God To quote the words of Dr Dasgupta ' The answer apparently implied in the *Gītā* to all objections to the apparently different views of the nature of God is that Transcendentalism, Immanentism, and Pantheism lose their distinctive and opposite characters in the melting whole of the superpersonality of God " (*History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, p 527)

This conception of a superpersonal God apapears in the *Gītā* in two forms Firstly, it appears in the form of the idea of Avatāra which is sketched in iv 7 and 8 This idea, as Dr Dasgupta has pointed out, is a new idea introduced by the *Gītā* which did not exist in the Upanisads, an idea which played a very important part in the religious life of our country The significance of the conception of Avatāra has been beautifully shown by Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gītā*, First Series The essence of this conception is thus indicated by him ' The Avatara comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human

nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine" (p 217) "It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below, it is the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence' (*ibid*, p 230)

This is one way in which God descends into the world The other way is the more diffuse way in which He descends into the whole of Nature and the world of conscious and unconscious beings The fifteenth chapter deals with this second type of descent

God as Purusottama has shed here His awful aloofness and become the indwelling principle of the whole world of matter, life, and consciousness He is the active principle in the world, upholding everything He is seated in the heart of everything ('*sarvasya cā'ham hrdi sannivistah*') From Him emerge memory and wisdom and also their absence He is the subject-matter of all the Vedas ('*Vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*'), the author of the Vedānta and the knower of the Veda He is described as taking possession of the bodies of breathing things in the form of the

Fire of Life (*'aham vaisvanaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ'*) Only a part of Him has descended into the world of living beings (*'mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanatanaḥ*) Further—and this is a point which I like to stress—we notice here what I have already pointed out, namely, that the *Gītā* does not separate the transcendent and immanent aspects of God distinctly, but that, on the whole, God's immanent aspect is more clearly shown here than His other aspect. From the point of view of the *Gītā*, transcendence and immanence cannot really be separated God's transcendence must be maintained; otherwise it is not worth while realizing God On the other hand, it must be possible for us to realize Him, and for that, He must shed His aloofness to some extent to make Himself accessible to us Indeed, it is in the manner in which the transcendent and immanent characteristics of God are combined that the beauty of the *Gītā's* conception of Puruṣottama chiefly lies There is one important consequence for human beings of this conception of Puruṣottama It is, as Sri Aurobindo points out (vide *Essays on the Gītā*, 2nd edn , 2nd Series, p 243), that the highest state of the soul is a dwelling in the Puruṣottama and not a complete dissolution (*laya*).

The realization of the Purusottama is the highest realization in the *Gita*, and is therefore rightly called *guhyatamam śastram* But to complete it, it is necessary that there should be a knowledge of certain features of the world in which we live The first thing which the seeker after perfect realization is to know is that there is a twofold division in the whole world of living beings ('*dvau bhutasargau*')—the Divine (*Daiva*) and the Demoniacal (*Āsura*) Human beings are no exception to this universal principle of division, and they can also be divided into the Daiva and the Āsura It is at first not quite clear why the threefold division of the fourteenth chapter according to the *gunas* is not adopted in this chapter, but instead of that we get a bipartite division into the Daiva and the Āsura The division in accordance with the *gunas* is undoubtedly more scientific and is adopted again in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters Its temporary eclipse by a bipartite division is due to the special purpose of this chapter, which is to show that from the point of view of their influence for good or for evil, human beings can be divided into two classes The Tamasika man is either ruled out or, as Sri Aurobindo conjectures, is probably included in the Āsura class * Whatever that might be,

the presence of these two types of men with their respective qualities is of special importance for the man who is in the final stage of realization He should know that any the least trace in him of the qualities of the lower type of men should be carefully removed

The seventeenth chapter brings into prominence the importance of *sraddhā* or faith The *Gita* declares that a man is as his faith is ('*yo yacchraddhab sa eva sab*') Objective conditions of realization are of course important, but the most important condition is the subjective one of faith Without this all action is false

> अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
> असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ XVII 28

The *Gita* has also in previous chapters emphasized the importance of *sraddha*, for example, in vi 47 it has said that 'among all Yogins, he who, full of faith, with the inner Self abiding in Me, adoreth Me, he is considered by Me to be the most completely harmonized' But in the seventeenth chapter faith is made the the essential subjective condition of all virtuous action The importance of this teaching for the man about to reach the highest stage of realization cannot be exaggerated, for he must make a thorough self-

examination in order to find out whether all his actions are prompted by the highest kind of *śraddhā*.

The eighteenth chapter sums up the whole teaching of the *Gītā*. As I have already pointed out, the *yogas* mentioned in the previous chapters first find their complete fulfilment in the eighteenth chapter. Neither the Sāṃkhyayoga mentioned in the second chapter, nor the Karmayoga described in the third chapter, nor any other Yoga described in the previous chapters finds its completion in the instruction imparted in that chapter, but waits for its consummation in the final instruction imparted in the eighteenth chapter. The eighteenth chapter, therefore, gives the final touch to the teaching of all the previous chapters and completes that process of self-realization, and consequently also God-realization, which it is the object of the *Gītā* to expound.

It starts with the fundamental opposition of the earlier chapters, namely, that between *sannyāsa* and *karmayoga*, which stands in the way of self-realization. This opposition it gets rid of much in the same way in which it is done in the earlier chapters, but with a difference which is due to the teaching of the later chapters concerning the modifications of all mental qualities due to

the action of the *gunas* It makes a distinction between *sannyasa* and *tyaga*, the latter conveying, as Sri Krishna Prem points out in addition to the idea of relinquishment, that of a positive donation The analysis of the three kinds of *tyaga*, according to the prevalence of the three *gunas*, has the merit of showing in what the essence of the pure form of *tyaga* consists This essence, according to the finding of the *Gita* is the doing of an action purely from a sense of duty 'with complete freedom from attachment and relinquishment of fruits' (xviii 9)

The *Gita* next gives an analysis of action Five causes are mentioned of every action, whether good or bad These five causes are (1) *adhist hāna* (body) (2) *karta* (agent) (3) *karanam prtha gvidham* (the various sense organs) (4) *vividha ca prithak cesta* (the various life functions and bio motor activities) and (5) *daiva* This last cause has been explained by Dr S N Dasgupta as 'the unknown objective causal elements or the all-controlling power of God' (*History of Indian Phi losophy*, Vol II, p 515) It would, however, be more in consonance with the general standpoint of the *Gita*, which looks upon God as the ultimate controller of all beings (Cf xviii 61), to take the word in the second of the two senses mentioned

by Dr Dasgupta In any case, the agent is only one of the causes and cannot arrogate to himself the position of being the sole determinant of action In fact, the *Gita* calls him a man of perverted nature who thinks that he is the sole author of his actions (xviii 16) Until this false notion is completely removed and a man feels that the ultimate author of everything is God, there is no possibility of attaining complete self realization. This instruction is very necessary for Arjuna, for his chief failing is egoism, as the Lord Himself points out with rather brutal frankness (xviii 58 60)

This raises the question of human freedom I have discussed the question already, and I cannot do more than just touch upon it here Although Lord Kṛsna in xi 33 and 34 points out that all the foes (Drona, Bhisma, Jayadratha, etc) have been slain by Him and asks Arjuna to be only the instrumental cause of their death, yet it is not true that the *Gita* does not believe in human freedom It only does not regard man as the sole or even as the ultimate author of his actions The agent is mentioned as one of the causes of his action in xviii 14, and indeed, the whole purpose of the *Gita* will be frustrated if man is treated merely as an automaton If the *Gītā* had treated Arjuna as a mere automaton it would

not have wasted eighteen chapters in teaching him the way to self-realization. The words of the *Gītā*: (*'uddhared atmanā ātmānam'*) (vi: 5) clearly prove, if any proof indeed was needed, that the *Gītā* does not advocate absolute determinism. I need not discuss the question further as I have already discussed it fully in the fourth essay.

We come now to the doctrine of Svadharma and Svabhāva which is just touched upon in ii: 31 and iii: 35 and more fully dealt with in the last chapter. A good deal of misconception prevails regarding the meaning of this doctrine. Many people have jumped to the conclusion that here is the support of the *Gītā* for the caste system. But before jumping to this conclusion we should consider one simple thing, namely, that there is no mention in the *Gītā* of the hereditary principle which is the basis of the caste system. There is no doubt here a justification of a fourfold social order based upon differences of quality and Karma of men, but this is very different from the caste system, the root idea of which is heredity. It will indeed be quite correct to say that the *Gītā* does not favour a caste system based upon heredity.

What it does favour is a social system in which everyone can pursue that work which is in accordance with his nature. The *Gītā* no doubt

believes that men can be divided into four broad classes; and it has given the names, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiṣya, and Śūdra, to these four classes. But if the characteristics of the higher classes are examined, it will be found that they are inner characteristics, qualities that have reference to the inner nature of the man, rather than external characteristics indicative of status and family. Sri Aurobindo has drawn our attention particularly to this point and has also shown the significance of the difference which we notice between the characteristics of the higher classes and those of the lower classes. The reason for this difference is, as he states, that 'the temperament moved to production and wealth-getting or limited in the circle of labour and service, the mercantile and the servile mind, are usually turned outward, more occupied with the external values of their work than its power for character, and this disposition is not so favourable to a Sattvic or spiritual action of this nature' (*Essays on the Gita*, 2nd edn., 2nd Series, p. 335).

The principle of Svadharma means that a man's duty is to act in conformity with his true nature. What, however, is the true nature of a man? The *Gītā* believes that every man's nature must belong to one or other of the four types already mentioned. How, however, is a man to know

to which of these four types he belongs? The advice of the *Gīta* here is very practical On the whole, it is much safer to accept the verdict of society and regard oneself as belonging to the class to which one is assigned by society than arbitrarily to select one's class oneself Even if we do not take into account the superhuman knowledge which enables Lord Kṛṣna to estimate accurately the status of Arjuna, even if we say that the Lord calls Arjuna a Ksatriya because he is called so by society, we have to re-reflect that this social order is not an arbitrary order but is itself the expression of the Divine Will. If the status given to an individual by society deviates very considerably from the status to which he is entitled by his Svabhāva, if, consequently, there is coercion and oppression of individuals, then that becomes a fit occasion for the Lord to come down as Avatara and bring the perverted social order back to its normal and healthy condition In this way Svadharma and the Dharma of society are brought into harmony with each other

It must not also be forgotten that the social self is really our Greater Self, a fuller expression of our individual self The *Gītā* does not believe in any realization of the individual except through

society This is the social aspect of the doctrine of *Svabhava* and *Svadharma*, and that is why the *Gita* connects this doctrine with the institution of the fourfold order which is, indeed, the conception of society in the *Gita* We may challenge the particular fourfold order mentioned in the *Gita*, we may say that it is artificial, but some social order is needed if the individual is to realize his self And after all, the fourfold order as sketched in the *Gita*, is not as artificial and unnatural as it appears at first sight to be For, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out (Vide *Essays on the Gita* 2nd Series, 2nd edn , p 345), " there is always in human nature something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped wide or narrow, suppressed or rising to the surface, but in most one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature And in any society we should have all four types,—even, for example, if we could create a purely productive and commercial society such as modern times have attempted, or for that matter, a Sudra society of labour of the proletariate such as attracts the most modern mind and is now being attempted in one part of Europe and advocated in others There would still be the thinkers moved to find the law and truth and

guiding rule of the whole matter, the captains and and leaders of industry who would make all this productivity activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, the many typical purely productive and wealth getting men, the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour"

The *Gita* next proceeds to show how by doing one's Svadharma one can attain unity with God It begins by saying that a man must worship God through the Karma that is proper to him ('*svakarmana tam abhyarcya siddhim vindati manavah*' xviii 46) Then it makes that famous assertion (xviii 47) 'Better is one's duty, though destitute of merit, than the well executed duty of another' Proceeding in the same strain, it asserts that one must not abandon the duty which is in conformity with one's nature even though it is defective, for all undertakings have defects, just as no fire is without smoke (xviii 48) The next six verses (49 54) describe the manner in which the individual can obtain complete union with God by doing his own Svadharma The words which the *Gita* uses in this connection are *brahmabhuyaya kalpate* ('he is fit to become Brahman') These words are also used in xiv 26 in connection with the

description of the condition of the *triguṇatīta*. Another word which the *Gita* uses to indicate the condition of being one with God is *brahmabhuta*. This word is also used in v. 24 in the same sense. In ii. 72, v. 24 and v. 25 the word used to indicate the nature of the self when it becomes one with Brahman is *brahmanirvana*. All these words evidently mean the same thing and are intended to express the fact that the self which has had the complete realization is indeed nothing else than God. This is quite in conformity with the spirit of the Upanisads which say: 'The knower of Brahman is nothing else than Brahman'—*Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*, Mund. Up. III. 2. 9.

Such is the way in which the *Gita* sums up its teaching. It is a book, as I have said at the beginning, which deals with Sadhana or way to realization. It ends, therefore, with a triumphant message of hope from God:

> सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
> अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ XVIII. 66

and an equally triumphant declaration of loyalty and devotion from Arjuna:

> नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।
> स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ XVIII. 73

The concluding verse of the *Gītā* puts its whole teaching in a nutshell

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम॥

It is the combination of Yogeśvara with a loyal and devoted Dhanurdhara, like Arjuna, which is necessary for the well-being of the world If Arjuna were merely a devoted disciple, that would not have sufficed. It was necessary that he should be a Dhanurdhara, a worker, and not a man merely given to contemplation The uplift of the universe, therefore, rests upon two conditions which must be fulfilled by human beings: (1) They must be prepared to open out their minds to the light from above in an attitude of complete faith and devotion, and (2) they must be prepared to act in accordance with the light which they receive from above in a spirit of absolute self-effacement and detachment If they fulfil these conditions, then only can they receive illumination from the Lord of Yoga which will enable them to lift the universe from its present hopelessly degraded condition to one of eternal peace and blessedness

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE KATHOPANISAD**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KAṬHOPANISAD

The Kathopanisad holds a unique position among the Upanisads Although in point of variety of topics discussed, it cannot compare with the bigger Upanisads, such as the Bṛhadāranyaka and the Chāndogya, yet it is far more compact than the latter, and it has the additional merit of being wholly unitary in the conception and development of its theme It lacks no doubt the profundity of thought of some of the passages in the Bṛhadāranyaka and the Chāndogya, but it is not marred by the presence of such irrelevant matter as, for instance, the elaborate details concerning rituals for procuring good things of life and begetting children, which occur in Br Up 6 3 and 6.4 It presents a well-knit structure animated by one single thought which runs through the whole of this Upanisad

But more than all this, the Kathopanisad blends more perfectly than any other Upanisad the two great features which form the warp and woof of every Upanisad, namely, Realization and Philosophy As the universal science of values,

** Reprinted from "The Vedanta Kesari," May, August and October 1943

'while he who chooses the more pleasant fails to attain the goal.

The better and the more pleasant both come to man. Having examined them from all sides, the wise man discriminates between them. He chooses the better rather than the more pleasant, while the foolish man through desire to have and to hold, chooses the more pleasant."

On the face of it, the distinction is one on the ethical plane, but in reality, it extends far beyond it. Like the idea of good in Plato, Śreyas is something more than the ethical good; it is in fact a general name for a value. So also Preyas does not mean merely that which is pleasant, but stands for whatever is sensuous or a mere matter of fact, in other words, Existence. This being premised, we shall be able to understand the criticism of the standpoint of Preyas from that of Śreyas, which we find in the beginning of the second vallī of the second chapter. That Śreyas and Preyas are understood not merely in the ethical but also in the metaphysical sense is clear from the fact that immediately after the exposition of the difference between the two, the same sort of difference is asserted between Vidyā (Knowledge) and Avidyā (Ignorance) in I. 2.4. There is no doubt that the first pair of

opposites is identified with the second pair Plato in his criticism of Protagoras in the "Theaetetus" made a similar identification between Protagoras' doctrine "Knowledge is perception" and the Heraclitean doctrine of Becoming Just as for Plato adherence to Protagoras' doctrine means nothing else than acceptance of the theory of flux or momentariness of things, so also for *the Kathopanisad the standpoint of Preyas is* nothing else than that of Avidyā, while that of Śreyas is the standpoint of Vidyā Philosophy consists in clinging to the standpoint of Śreyas or Vidyā, that is to say, to that of Value, and rejecting that of Preyas or Avidyā, that is to say, that of Existence

This is, however, no new idea introduced by the Kathopanisad, but is the central thought of all the Upanisads We see this very clearly, for example, in the third brāhmana of the second chapter of the Bṛhadaranyakopanisad, where, after stating that there are two forms of *Brahman*, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the limited and the unlimited,[2] it is

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Deussen translates स्थितम् as 'abiding' and यत्, as "fleeting" Hume translates them respectively as stationary' and 'moving' These translations retain no doubt the etymological meanings of these words, but they suffer from the serious defect that they make मूर्त the highest

stated that reality is the *rasa*, i e, the value or essence of both It is described as *neti, neti*, that is, as *different from everything which is a mere existence* It is also characterized positively as *satyasya satyam*, 'the truth of truth,' that is to say, as the inner meaning or value of all existence

Here we are introduced to a second order or dimension of reality, as contrasted with the first order or dimension, which is called existence This second dimension is the dimension of value The same reference to another dimension of reality, over and above that of existence, we also find in Kena 1 2, where reality is described as "the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the breath of breath, the eye of the eye" The meaning evidently here is that there is a deeper core of reality underlying that which appears on the surface, which may be called its essence or value—a second dimension of reality, in addition to the first dimension, which is called existence

This realization of different dimensions of reality, of which existence is only one, later crystallized itself in the conception of Saccidananda As Deussen remarks (*Vide Philosophy of the Upanishads*

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and अमूर्त the lower category, which is opposed to the general purport of the whole sentence I have therefore accepted Sankara's interpretation which takes स्थितम् as परिच्छिन्नम् that is, 'limited' and यत् as अपरिच्छिन्नम् that is, unlimited'

pp. 126-27), this conception is found only in the later Upaniṣads, but one very close to it is found in Bṛ. Up. 3. 9. 28, where Brahman is called "vijñānam ānandaṃ brahma," also in Taitt. 2.1, where it is called "satyaṃ jñānam anantam." But even if the explicit recognition of Reality as having three dimensions, Sat (Truth), Cit (Consciousness) and Ānanda (Bliss) is not found in the earlier Upaniṣads, the recognition of the value-aspect of Reality characterizes throughout the Upanisadic conception of it.

Reality as beyond Dharma and Adharma, Cause and Effect, Past, Present and Future.

The next stage in the conception of Reality, as expounded in the Kaṭhopaniṣad, is indicated by the words of Naciketas (Kaṭh. 1.2.14):

अन्यत्र धर्मादन्यत्राधर्मात् ।
अन्यत्रास्मात् कृताकृतात् ॥
अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च
यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद ॥

("Other than Dharma, other than Adharma; other than both Cause and Effect; other also than Past, Present and Future; That which thou seest, tell me that"—Sri Krishna Prem's translation, given at p. 91 of his *The Yoga of the Kaṭopaniṣad*),

I have only added the word "Present" for the particle 'च' indicates that the present also is included.) Reality is here definitely asserted to be beyond Dharma and Adharma, Cause and Effect, Past, Present and Future, that is to say, beyond all existential categories. This follows directly from the conception of it as Value with which, as we have just seen, the second valli of the first chapter starts. Reality as Value is beyond the range of the categories.

This is the reason why in the other Upanisads also Reality is described by means of contradictory epithets. Thus, for instance, in Taitt. Up. 2.6, Brahman is described as the actual (sat) and the yon (tyat), as the defined (nirukta) and the undefined (anirukta), as the based (nilayana) and the non-based (anilayana), as the conscious (vijñana) and the unconscious (avijñana), as the true (satya) and the false (anṛta). So also in the passage we have already quoted from the Bṛ. Up., Brahman is said to have two opposite forms, the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the limited and the unlimited. In Ch. Up. 6.2.1. Uddalaka Āruni mentions to his son two opposite views regarding the Ultimate Reality, namely, that it is Being and also that it is non-Being. This idea that the Ultimate Reality is both

Being and non Being is one of the root ideas of the Upanisads and goes back to RV X 129

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, as well as the Chandogyopanisad, this idea is further sought to be supported by the etymological meaning of the word *satyam* Bṛ Up 5 5 1 splits 'satyam' into three syllables, sa ti-yam, the first and the third syllable indicating the truth, and the second the untruth, the idea being that untruth is enclosed on both sides by truth, and in this way partakes of the nature of truth In Ch Up 8 3 5 a different derivation of the word is given, the three syllables into which it is split being sat ti yam, of which the first means the immortal, the second the mortal, and the third that which holds together the mortal and the mortal, the whole meaning being that Reality is that which holds together Being and non-Being, the immortal and the mortal In Kaus Up 1 6 another derivation is given, the word being split into two syllables *sat* and *tyam*, 'sat' meaning whatever is other than the gods[3] and the vital breath (prāna) and is exalted above them (as Deussen suggests), and 'tyam' indicating the gods and the vital breath, that is, external and internal nature (as Deussen thinks)

[3] R E Hume translates 'deva' as 'sense organ,' without giving any reason why he does not accept the ordinary meaning of the word

In the smaller Upaniṣads also we see the same thing. There also the nature of Brahman is characterized by contradictory epithets, Thus, in Īṣ. Up. 5, Brahman is described as "that which moves and as that which does not move, as that which is far-off as well as that which is near, as that which is inside all, as well as that which is outside of all." Similarly, in *Śvet. Up.* 5.1., *it is said* about *Brahman*: "*There* are two things that lie hidden in the imperishable, supreme Brahman, namely, knowledge and ignorance. Now ignorance is perishable, but knowledge is immortal, and He who rules both knowledge and ignorance is another (different from both)."

These contradictory predicates only prove that the Ultimate Reality is to be conceived as a Value and not as a Being or Existence. Contradiction only arises when opposite qualities are attributed to Reality conceived as a mere Existence. But if Reality is conceived as a Value, then not only can opposite qualities dwell in it without contradiction, but its nature can only be expressed by opposite qualities. This fundamental distinction between Value and Existence must be borne in mind if we are to understand the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Logical contradictions cannot

not break the structure of Values; they can only prove destructive to what is a mere Existence The celebrated Kantian antinomies, as Bergson has pointed out, only prove fatal to Reality as understood by universal mathematics A Reality, so conceived, no doubt "lives and dies by antinomies" But not so Reality conceived as a Value The logic of such Reality is very different from the logic of the categories For it is the logic of the Infinite Value which, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, is magic to our finite consciousness

The Ultimate Reality is not accessible to logic

We thus come to the central teaching of our Upanisad, and for the matter of that, of all the Upanisads, namely, that Reality in its ultimate essence cannot be grasped by what we ordinarily call logic, that is to say, the logic of Concept. This is what the Kathopanisad means when it says: "नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया." These words affirm that the Ultimate Reality cannot be revealed by conceptual reasoning The logic of conceptual thought, with its fixed categories of Cause, Substance, etc, is constitutionally incapable of grasping the nature of the Absolute The same thing is said also in another verse (II 3 12) of this Upanisad, where it is asserted that the Self

is not to be obtained by speech mind or the eye, but is to be known only by the intuition of the man who affirms its existence In a similar strain speaks also Kath I 2 23 ' The Ātman is not to be obtained by instruction, nor by intellect, nor by much learning but is to be obtained only by that (atman) which he (the seeker) seeks To such a person the Ātman reveals its own form ' [4] This verse is repeated in Mund Up 3 2 3 So also in Taitt Up 2 9 it is said of Brahman " Wherefrom words come back with an unfulfilled mind," thereby indicating that the intellect is not in a position to grasp its nature

Many more verses and passages like these can be quoted to show that in the view of the Upanisads the Ultimate Reality is not accessible to conceptual thought This is, of course, precisely what is to be expected if Reality is a Value Contradictions, which seem apparently to break the very structure of Reality, will be found, when Reality is conceived as Value, to be just what is needed to express its nature An example of this is afforded by Kath I 2 10 I quote the whole verse here

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[4] I have adopted Śankara s interpretation of this verse The interpretation of Madva who sees here a statement of the doctrine of grace is not acceptable, because the doctrine

जानाम्यहं शेवधिरित्यनित्यं
न ह्य ध्रुवैः प्राप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् ।
ततो मया नाचिकेतश्चितोऽग्नि—
रनित्यद्रव्यैः प्राप्तवानस्मि नित्यम् ॥

Adopting with slight changes[5] Sri Krishna Prem's translation of this verse, we may render it into English as follows: "I know that the fruits of action are impermanent; for in truth, the Eternal is not to be gained by that which is temporal. Therefore I have laid the Naciketas fire, and with transient things I have attained the Eternal."

The second and third lines of this verse are manifestly in contradiction with the first two lines. But curiously enough, in most of the translations of this verse, either the contradiction is not noticed, or where it is noticed, the attempt made to remove it is not at all successful.

Let me make my meaning clear. The first two lines assert that the permanent cannot be obtained by that which is impermanent, wheras the next two lines assert just the opposite

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is not found anywhere in this, as well as in other earlier Upanisads.

[5] The most important change I have made is with regard to the word 'शवधि'. Sri Krishna Prem translates it as 'treasure-house.' There can be no doubt that the word is here used metaphorically, as Śankara shows, in the sense of the fruits of one's actions.

of this, namely that the Eternal has been attained with transient things Max Muller seems to be conscious of this inconsistency as appears from the footnote he has appended to his translation of this verse But in spite of this, the inconsistency appears very glaringly in his translation He puts this verse in the mouth of Naciketas, although it was Yama and not Naciketas who first laid the Naciketas fire, and then he translates as follows "I know that what is called a treasure is transient, for that eternal is not obtained by things which are not eternal Hence the Naciketas fire (sacrifice) has been laid by me (first), then, by means of transient things, I have obtained what is not transient (the teaching of Yama)" (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol I, p 9) In this translation the second line, "that eternal is not obtained by things which are not eternal," manifestly contradicts the fourth, "then, by means of transient things, I have obtained what is not transient' If the eternal cannot be obtained by things which are not eternal how can one obtain by means of transient things what is not transient? Yet Max Müller thinks his translation has got rid of the contradiction between these lines! Hume's transla

only difference is that the word "adhruvaih" in the second line he translates as 'by those who are unsteadfast,' instead of as Max Müller does, 'by things which are not eternal.' This slight difference, however, does not at all help to remove the inconsistency. He is, moreover, not even aware of the inconsistency.

Sri Krishna Prem seems to be fully conscious of the contradiction between the two pairs of lines, yet the interpretation he puts upon them leaves the contradiction just as it is. Let us see what he does to remove the inconsistency. At p. 60 of *The Yoga of the Kathopaniṣad* he says, "Therefore, as the Teacher says, it is unwise to seek to leap at one bound across the ramparts. Rather, by skilful use of the ephemeral (remember that "Yoga is skill in action") we should seek to build up the altar for the Naciketas fire, and, with its aid, establish ourselves in that all-inclusive Dwelling which is referred to by Yama as the Enduring before attempting the final flight to the Alone. This is the so-much-misunderstood path of Krama-mukti or liberation by stages" That may be, but what has the question of Krama-mukti or Sadyo-mukti to do with the problem before us, namely, How to remove the apparent contradiction between the first two and

the last two lines of the verse? If the eternal cannot, from the very nature of things, be obtained from the non-eternal, then no amount of skill in the use of the ephemeral will enable this to be done

Contrasted with the attempts of these Western scholars to remove the inconsistency, which are all unsuccessful, Śankara's attempt is quite successful He understands 'permanent' in the last line to mean 'comparatively permanent' as the position enjoyed by Yama (yāmyapada) as a matter of fact is But this interpretation suffers from one serious defect namely, that it twists the meaning of the word 'nitya' to make it connote the comparatively permanent

To my mind the explanation of the inconsistency is quite simple All the difficulties, I think, will disappear if we remember that Reality is a Value, and that consequently, the principles of conceptual logic do not apply to it The principle enunciated in the second line "नहि ध्रुवै प्राप्यतेहिध्रुवंतत्", "The permanent cannot be obtained by non permanent things," is the logical principle of causality, which requires that there should be more in the cause than in the effect This principle does not apply to Reality which is a Value In fact, what the verse wants to say is

something like the following "*No doubt the fruits of Karma are impermanent, and there is* the rule of conceptual logic that by the impermanent nothing permanent can be obtained, yet I have employed the impermanent thing, the Naciketas fire, for the purpose of obtaining the permanent, because this rule does not apply to the Real, which is above (conceptual) logic (as the previous verse has declared)"

In fact, as Nikolai Hartmann has shown, the relation of dependence between values is very different from the dependence expressed by the causal principle *In the domain of values it is* the higher values which are dependent upon the lower But this dependence is a material one, axiologically, of course, the higher values are quite independent of the lower In other words, the lower values are necessary for the production of the higher values, though the content of the higher values is quite independent of the content of the lower values As Hartmann puts it, 'a relation of dependence holds between the wider and narrower spheres of values It is an unequivocal, irreversible dependence of the higher upon the lower But the dependence is purely material, not axiological The lower is the stuff upon which the higher works, it is merely the

condition sine qua non of the latter In every other sense the higher is independent of it, its specific quality, its moral goodness, is something entirely new" (*Ethics*, Vol II, p 25)

This axiological principle we may express symbolically as follows If A is the cause of B, and if A and B are both existents, then A must be greater than B But if A and B are values, then a very small value A may produce a very great value B

In fact, the logic of Value, or as we may call it, the logic of the Real, is very different from the logic of Concept Here the causal law is transformed into the law of end and means The principle of this law is just the reverse of that of the causal law Here a finite means produces an infinite value, as stated in the last line of this verse "अनित्यद्रव्यै प्राप्तवानस्मि नित्यम्"

II

I have already shown how the Kathopanisad takes the standpoint of Value and how the difficulties in the interpretation of this Upanisad arise from failure to understand this But the most fundamental thing about value is that it has grades Value is, *par excellence*, a graded reality Nikolai Hartmann while admitting that value has grades refuses to acknowledge any highest

or supreme value. He gives several reasons for this refusal, of which the main ones are (1) that values are multilinear and not unilinear, and that consequently, what is ultimate in one direction cannot be ultimate in others, and (2) that although the scale of values undoubtedly points to a unity, yet the source of this unity need not necessarily be a value.

On each of these points there are fundamental differences between the standpoint of values of the Upaniṣads and that of Hartmann. The Upanisadic conception of values is that of a pyramid, that is to say, it looks upon all values as tending towards one ultimate one, which crowns them all. Secondly, it emphatically declares that the highest principle is a value, and not merely an ontological reality. We are not, however, discussing here the philosophical theory of values, and therefore a detailed examination of these questions is out of place.

For us the most important thing is that the Upanisads believe in a gradation of values and in a supreme value at the top of the scale.

The Two Selves in Man

We thus see that whenever the Upaniṣads speak of values, they speak of a higher and a lower,

of a highest and a lowest, of a zenith and a nadir of values This being premised, we shall be able to understand why the Kathopanisad also, following this tendency, makes a fundamental distinction between two selves in us, the higher self and the lower self This distinction we notice in Kath I 3 1

ऋतं पिबन्तौ सुकृतस्य लोके
गुहां प्रविष्टौ परमे परार्धे ।
छायातपौ ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति
पञ्चाग्नयो ये च त्रिणाचिकेता ॥

This verse we may translate as follows

"There are two that drink of the fruits of action, who have both entered the cave (of the heart) in the highest upper sphere Those who know Brahman speak of them as light and shade So also do householders who maintain the five fires and those who worship the Naciketas fire [6]

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[6] Sri Krishna Prem does not distinguish between the worshippers of the fivefold fire and those of the triple Naciketas fire, but treats them both as belonging to the same class This view, however, it is unfortunately not possible to accept, for the worship of the fivefold fire is much more ancient than that of the Naciketas fire There are two variants of this fivefold fire The one is what we find in Br 6 2 9—13, and Ch 5 4—8 Here yonder world (heaven), the rain cloud, the earth, man and woman are conceived as five sacrificial fires The other variant takes the five fires to be *gārhapatya*, *dakṣina*, *āhavanīya*, *sabhya* and *āvasathya* Naciketas fire cannot be identified with either of these variants of the fivefold fire In our verse, therefore,

This is the fundamental gradation that we have to remember.' The Gitā also speaks similarly of a higher and a lower self:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ vi. 5

"Raise the self by the self and do not let the self be depressed; for verily is the self the friend of the self, and also the self the self's enemy."

This distinction between the two selves is given pointed expression in the well-known verse of the Muṇḍakopanisad (Mund 3. 1. 1.):

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्ति
अनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

which is repeated in Śvet. 4. 6 ('Two fair-plumaged close friends surround one and the same

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first the worshippers of the old ritual are mentioned and then those of the new ritual introduced by Yama. It may be asked: Why have the worshippers of the fivefold fire and those of the Naciketas fire been mentioned, along with the knowers of Brahman as persons who know the difference between these two selves? The reason is, as Śankara suggests, that the object was not to confine this knowledge to the world-renouncing followers of the path of knowledge but to admit even the householders to it. This is in keeping with the catholic spirit of the Kathopanisad which has no animus against the followers of the path of Karma.

tree One of them tastes the sweet berries, the other, without eating, only gazes downwards'—Deussen's translation) The two birds which are spoken of here, one enjoying the fruits of action, and the other remaining a mere onlooker, are nothing but the two selves mentioned in the above verse of the Kathopanisad [7] The lower self is

[7] Profs S K Belvalkar and R D Ranade in their joint work *History of Indian Philosophy, Vol II The Creative Period*, p 265, contrast this verse of the Mundakopanisad with the verse of the Kathopanisad we are discussing, saying, 'It seems, however, that the author of the Kathopanisad had not yet before his mind's eye a definite conception of the difference between the Individual and Universal Souls, especially as he described both of them as being obliged to taste of the fruits of action For true Vedantism, it is only the Individual Soul which could thus be described as "Ritapa," as enjoying the fruits of action, on the other hand, the Universal Soul must be entirely deprived of the trammels of action and fruit It is from this point of view probably that the Mundakopanisad (III 1 1) corrects the thought expressed in the Kathopaniṣad telling us that even though both the Individual and Universal Souls exist like birds on the same tree of the human body only one of them tastes of the fruits of actions, while the other, without tasting them, merely looks on in the spirit of the Aristotelian 'theorising God"

This remark, I think, is not justified As Śankara has clearly pointed out, the words *ṛtam pibantau* only apply to the lower self and not to the higher Here, in fact, we have an instance of what is known as *chatri nyaya* The stock example of this logic is as follows A king was walking with his attendants with an umbrella over his head Although it was only the king who had an umbrella over his head, the spectators who saw them walking, remarked 'People

engrossed in the world, feels joy or sorrow according to circumstances, in a word, identifies itself with the body The higher self, however, is conscious of its transcendence of the body, never allows itself to be affected by changes in the physical environment and always maintains an attitude of scrupulous detachment from the movements of the world This is why the distinction between them is said to be that between light and shade It is a fundamental distinction and is the basis of all further distinctions which we shall presently have to point out

It would be wrong, however, to see *in* this distinction *any attempt to disparage Karma* That would be contrary to the whole spirit of this Upanisad which has praised so highly the worship of the Naciketas fire The stress here is upon the word 'pivantau' 'drinking' It is engrossment with the world which is deprecated and not the life of Karma In fact, as the Īsopanisad says, the life of Karma should not be abandoned, what is to be avoided is attachment

with umbrellas over their heads are walking So here salo, although it is the lower self which is enjoying the fruits of actions the words *rtam pivantau* are applied to both That this is the correct interpretation of this verse appears from the fact that otherwise there would be no point as these joint authors themselves admit, in speaking of the difference between the two selves as one between light and shade

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ Is 2

The next verse of this *vallī* mentions an important practical consequence of this distinction between the higher and the lower self. The consequence is this: the followers of the lower self obtain salvation by gradual stages, through the worship of the Naciketas fire, while those who pursue the higher self attain the knowledge of the Immutable Brahman. The verse is a very important one, and I have referred to it elsewhere. It is as follows:

यः सेतुरीजानानामक्षरं ब्रह्म यत्परम् ।
अभयं तितीर्षतां पारं नाचिकेतं शकेमहि ॥

This may be translated as follows:

"We are able to know the Naciketas fire, which is the bridge for those who engage in yajña, as well as the immutable Brahman sought by those seekers of knowledge who are desirous of crossing on to the bank where no fear is."

This verse, as Śaṅkara points out, is divided into two clearly marked halves. The first half deals with the case of those who seek salvation through Karma. For them the central yajña is the setting up of the Naciketas fire, which is therefore rightly called the bridge to higher realization.

Without crossing this bridge it is not possible for these to obtain salvation. This is exactly in keeping with the description of this fire in the earlier parts of this Upaniṣad, where it is said of those who are worshippers of this fire, that they break the chains of death and pass into the blissful region of heaven (I. 1. 18). It is for this reason that it is given the epithet *svargya* (leading to heaven).

The second half of this verse contemplates the case of those who know the higher self. These are said to be seekers of the knowledge of Brahman. These pass straight into the region where there is no fear.

As I shall show presently, the Kaṭhopaniṣad teaches both kinds of salvation, the *krama-mukti* or salvation by stages, and the *sadyo-mukti* or immediate salvation. In this verse both kinds are mentioned, *sadyo-mukti* being reserved for the knowers of Brahman and *krama-mukti* for those who believe in yajña and are worshippers of the Naciketas fire. The worship of this fire does not immediately bring salvation, but is only a bridge which takes one to heaven, and from there eventually to salvation. It is not true therefore to say that the Kathopaniṣad teaches only *krama-mukti*.

The Ladder of Values

We have so far dealt with the fundamental contrast between the higher self and the lower self, with which the Kathopanisad initiates the whole discussion of the grades of value From this fundamental contrast it passes by a natural transition to other and lesser contrasts In fact, what it does is to give us a ladder of values—a scale of values from the *pianissimo* to the *fortissimo* This ladder of values is given in the fol lowing verses (Kath I 3 10 11)

इन्द्रियेभ्य पराह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मन ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥
महत परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः पर ।
पुरुषान्न पर किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गति ॥

'Higher than the senses are the objects of sense Higher than the objects of sense is the mind (*manas*) And higher than the mind is the in tellect (buddhi) Higher than the intellect is the Great Self (Mahat Ātman) Higher than the Great (Self) is the Unmanifest (Ayakta) Higher than the Unmanifest is the Purusa Higher than the Purusa there is nothing at all That is the End, that is the Ultimate Goal'

It may be represented by the following diagram

Upper Hemisphere	1. Purusa .. Highest 2. Avyakta
Lower Hemisphere	3. Mahat Ātman—Hiranyagarbha or Brahmā (Masc.) 4. Buddhi 5. Manas 6 Objects of sense 7. The senses .. .. .. Lowest.

The values are arranged in two hemispheres, called respectively upper and lower, because there is a vital distinction between the two, the values in the lower hemisphere being subject to the law of transmigration or the cycle of birth and death, while those in the upper hemisphere not being so subject. The scale of values given in Kaṭh. II. 3. 7-8. agrees with that given above with only one difference, namely, that the objects of sense are dropped. Another scale of values, for purposes of yoga, is given in I. 3. 13. It does not aim at theoretical completeness, its object being practical, namely, to give guidance to *yogins* in rising step by step from lower to higher values. This scale has only five values. At the lowest is Vāc, standing for all the senses; then comes Manas, then Jñāna Ātman, which is the same as Buddhi. Above

Jñana Ātman it puts Mahat Ātman, and on the top of all it puts the Śanta Atman What however, is this Śanta Ātman? Comparing this with the previous scale of values, we find that Śanta Ātman does duty for both Avyakta and Purusa Deussen has identified it with the Avyakta (*Phil of the Upanishads*, p 386) Against this identification we have to say that in an enumeration of values, although intermediate values are very often dropped, it is very unusual not to mention the top value It is more probable that as this scale does not aim at theoretical completeness but at giving practical guidance to the yogin, the seers of this Upanisad did not think it necessary to differentiate between the Avyakta and the Purusa, their main object being to show how the *yogin* could pass from the lower to the upper hemisphere Sri Krishna Premji takes Śanta Ātman to be the same as Purusa (*The Yoga of the Kathopanisad*, p 166) But then he regards Purusa also as Unmanifest In fact, he calls both Purusa and the Avyakta the Unmanifest (*Ibid* p 123), the two together forming the Unmanifest Parents But then it does not seem clear why only one of them should be called Avyakta in our Upanisad Moreover, as we shall see presently, the Purusa cannot be called unmanifest

Returning to our original scale of values, the four lowest values, the senses, the objects of sense, Manas and Buddhi, call for no special remark. What, however, is Mahat Ātman? Śaṅkara takes it to mean Hiraṇyagarbha, the first-born of creation (RV. X. 121), the Soul of the Universe, called also Brahmā (Masc.) (*yo brahmāṇam vidadhāti purvam* Sv. 6. 18). It is the first-born of creation, but like the rest of the created world, it is also subject to the law of transmigration. Bṛ. 4.4.4. is clear on this point. It says, 'Just as a goldsmith takes a little quantity of gold and fashions another, a newer and a better form, so does the self throw the body away, and dispelling its ignorance, make for itself another newer and more beautiful form, like that of the fathers, or of the Gandharvas, or of the gods, or of Prajapati or of Brahmā or of other beings.' The Mahat Ātman has been well described by Sri Krishna Premji as follows: The "Great Self" is the wide-extended Brahmā-world, the Cosmic Egg, which includes within its shell the totality of manifested being. It is in the most fundamental sense the Cosmos, for all lower worlds are partial views, abstractions, as it were, from the all-inclusive Whole.' (*The Yoga of the Kaṭopaniṣad*, p. 160). His further

characterization of it as 'the Divine Son who springs from the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the unmanifest Sun and Moon, the two Poles into which the Ultimate One divides and which are, as the Gītā tells us, eternal moments of its being,' unfortunately, we cannot accept, for, as we shall see presently, the Avyakta cannot be identified with Prakṛti Nor can Purusa be called 'the unmanifest Sun'

We come now to the Avyakta Profs Belvalkar and Ranade on p 264 of their joint work already referred to, say that probably the Avyakta is the same as the Pradhāna of the Sāmkhya We beg to differ from this view The whole object of the discussion in this *valli*, and indeed in the whole of this Upanisad, is to establish the ascendency of the Soul The parable of the Chariot emphasizes this point Its object is to show that the body is the chariot, of which the lord is the Soul, and that the senses, mind, intellect, in fact everything, exists for, and is controlled by, the Soul Into such a scheme the idea of an unconscious Pradhāna, working independently of any direction from the Soul, does not fit

The Avyakta, therefore, is not the Pradhana of the Sāmkhya Here we agree with Śankara, who in his commentary on *Brahma*

Sūtras I. 4. 1-7 has discussed fully the question whether the Avyakta mentioned in the Kaṭhopaniṣad can mean the Pradhāna of the Sāṃkhya and has come definitely to the conclusion that it cannot. He has compared the ascending scale of values in I. 3. 10-11 with the order in which the values are mentioned in the parable of the chariot. He finds all these values in the parable of the chariot, except one, and that is the Avyakta. Instead of this, there is *śarīra*, the body, in the latter. The body, therefore, in the parable is the same as the Avyakta. But the coarse body cannot be the Avyakta, for it is palpably manifest to our senses. The Avyakta, therefore, must be the subtlest form of the body, what he calls the *avidyātmikā bījaśakti*, that is, the unmanifest seed-energy, called Avidyā, which is the principle, with the help of which Brahman fashions the whole universe.

Consciousness-Force, as Sri Aurobindo calls it, which is not Avidyā, not a principle which veils the Purusa or the Supreme Reality, but is the Śakti or Power of that Supreme Reality itself. It is called Avyakta or the Unmanifest, because here we are viewing it as it is in itself and not as it projects itself into the world of creation. The Avyakta or the Unmanifest, that is to say, the Indeterminate, form of the supreme Reality is a necessary form of it. It expresses a fundamental truth about this Reality, namely, that no qualities or determinations are adequate to express its nature. It is for this reason that in the Bṛhadāranyakopanisad it is described as *neti neti*, 'not this, not this,' the idea being that no determinate, limited concept is adequate to express its nature. This is also the meaning of the expression *nedam yadidam upāsate* in the Kenopaniṣad. No symbol or image or concept is adequate to express the infinite fulness of the Ultimate Reality. It is therefore necessary to describe the Absolute as Avyakta. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, "the Absolute is not limitable or definable by any one determination or any sum of determinations . . . its indeterminability is the natural, the necessary condition both of its infinity of being and its infinity

of power of being, it can be infinitely all things because it is no thing in particular and exceeds *any definable totality*"[8]

But indeterminability is only one aspect of the Absolute, and it will be an extremely one sided view of it to look upon it merely as Avyakta This is why the Kathopanisad speaks of it as Purusa The Ultimate Reality is a Concrete Person and not a mere abstract universal It upholds and sustains the whole universe, it is by its rule, as Yājñavalkya says to Gārgi that the sun and the moon, the heaven and earth are held in their places, that the various divisions of time occur, that rivers flow in their proper directions, that the moral order, by which good deeds win their proper reward, is upheld, that the gods and the fathers are content with the gifts which they get It is out of fear of this Purusa that, as one verse of our Upanisad says, the fire burns, the sun shines, Indra and Vāyu perform their functions, and death advances It is that in which, as another beautiful verse of our Upaniṣad declares, the upward pointed roots of the great fig tree, called the universe, are embedded It is, in fact, the all ruling, all sustaining Concrete Reality which, is, in the best and truest sense of the term, a Person

[8] Vide *The Life Divine, Vol II, Part I, p* 33—34

Comparison with the Bhagavadgita and the older Upanisads

There is close parallelism between the scale of values in the Kathopanisad and that given in the Bhagavadgita In the fifteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita three distinct types of Purusa are mentioned, namely Ksara, Aksara and Purusottama Ksara is defined as *sarvam bhutam*, that is to say, all created beings who are subject to the law of transmigration The Aksara is the immutable Absolute It is the Absolute viewed in its aspect of pure transcendence, that aspect which is indicated by the words *neti neti* There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Aksara of the Bhagavadgita is the same as the Avyakta of our Upanisad To the Ksara of the Bhagvadgita corresponds the scale of values from Mahat Ātman downwards in our Upanisad These are all values of the phenomenal world which is subject to the cyclical law of birth and death

The highest value in the Gita is the Purusottama, whereas the highest in our Upanișad is the Purușa We do not hesitate to equate the two The Purusa of the Katopanișad is the same as the Purușottama of the Gita This appears from the following considerations In the first place, the opening

verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Gītā, which deals with the conception of the Puruṣottama, speaks of the tree of Saṃsāra with its roots fixed upwards and its branches turned downwards —an idea which it has directly borrowed from our Upaniṣad. The root conception of this chapter of the Gītā, therefore, is the same as that of our Upaniṣad, namely, that the whole of this universe is sustained by, and receives its nourishment from, the Infinite Reality which is its Source. Secondly, the description of the Puruṣottama in the Gītā agrees in all essentials (though, of course, it is more fully worked out in the Gītā) with that of Puruṣa in our Upaniṣad. The Gītā, for example, says:

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः।

'Neither the sun nor the moon nor fire shines there.'

The close similarity of this with the thought of the following verse of our Upaniṣad (II. 2. 15) will be at once evident:

'Not there shines the sun, nor moon, nor stars; nor these lightnings, still less this (earthly) fire'—(Sri Krishna Premji's translation). So again we have in the Gītā (XV. 13-15) the conception of the Puruṣottama as the indwelling principle of the universe, indicated by the words: *sarvasya cāhaṃ*

forth, as that into which he will be dissolved, as that in which he breathes.' This is also the core of the teaching relating to Ātman Vaiśvānara, communicated by Aśvapati Kaikeya to the six learned householders who approached him for instruction. (Ch. 5. 18).

It is needless to multiply instances. It is quite clear that the conception of Puruṣa as the Concrete Universal Self manifesting itself in the universe and dwelling in it as its Inner Ruler, is abundantly present in the older Upanisads. But what is new in the Kaṭhopaniṣad is the recognition of it as a distinct value, over and above that of the Avyakta. The Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad does not differentiate the Akṣara from the Purusa. This is evident from Yājñavalkya's answer to Gārgī's question, 'Across what is Space woven, warp and woof?' Yājñavalkya replies, 'The Aksara.' And then he gives a description of the Aksara, at first in the form of *neti neti*, that is, purely negatively, as 'not coarse, not fine, not short, not long' etc. (Bṛ. 3. 8. 8.) This is, indeed, the *only way in which the Akṣara can be* described. But immediately after describing it in this way, Yājñavalkya begins to characterize it positively as the Ruler and Moral Governor of the universe: 'Under the mighty rule of this

Immutable, O Gārgi, the sun and moon are held in their positions . . . . Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgi, men praise those that give, the gods depend upon the sacrificer, and the Manes on independent offerings (*darvihoma*) (Bṛ. 3. 8. 9—Swami Madhavananda's translation).

It is quite obvious that the conception of the Ruler and Moral Governor of the universe as sketched in the above passage is very different from that of the Aksara. Śaṅkara, in fact, in his commentary on this passage, interprets it as a sort of teleologico-cosmological proof of God's existence. It is even something more, for God is here viewed not only as an intelligent Ruler, but also as the upholder of the moral law. In any case, the Akṣara cannot, by any straining of the meaning of the word, signify a Concrete Personality ruling and shaping the universe from within.

It is the merit of the Kaṭhopaniṣad to have felt the need of an explicit recognition of such a principle and to have put it at the head of the table of values. This need, I may however point out, is an axiological and not a logical need. Logically speaking, you need not go beyond the Akṣara. Rising step by step in point of abstraction, you reach the pinnacle in the conception

of the Aksara That is why the later systematised Vedānta did not feel the need of any principle beyond the Aksara or the Nirguna Brahman But axiologically it is incomplete There is the feeling of a lacuna, of something missing, which forces the unsystematised Vedānta of the Upanisads and the Gitā to recognize a Purusa above the Aksara It is true that the Hegelian logic has put the concrete universal at the head of the table of categories But this it has succeeded in doing, because of the revolutionary change it has made in the conception of logic, which has enabled it to give to logical categories a position somewhat similar to that of axiological principles But logic, understood in the sense of the logic of the concept, does not feel the need of a concrete universal, and for it the Aksara is the highest category Here we have a fundamental divergence between the standpoint of logic and that of axiology

III

Salvation, an axiological and not a logical necessity

The conception of Purusa in the *Kathopanisad* is thus not a logical but an axiological

necessity[10] The same is the case with salvation It also is an axiological and not a logical necessity This is the reason why in the Western philosophical systems it does not figure so much as it does in our systems, for in the West philosophical systems have been mainly built upon the foundation of logic, while in our country they have been chiefly based upon axiology It is not possible to prove the necessity of salvation logically It does not follow either from the nature of the individual or from the relation of the individual to God The individual, to maintain his individuality, would have to oppose salvation, but he feels that he would rather sacrifice his individuality in order to realize the value of salvation Here, therefore, there is a clear divergence between the logical and the axiological need So, again, it does not follow from the nature of the relation between the individual and God Individual salvation, in fact, is a side issue which is quite distinct from the general evolutionary scheme which gives the individual his position in the cosmos It marks a revolt

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[10] Strictly speaking, we cannot use the expression 'axiological necessity,' for values can never have any coercive power such as is associated with the word 'necessity' For the same reason, as I have pointed out elsewhere, it is not permissible to speak of a 'moral necessity' as Kant does

against the position which logic has assigned to him in the general scheme. He is not satisfied with this position; he would go against it in order to realize his highest value, although he feels that to do so would jeopardise his individuality. Here the freedom of the individual clashes with his higher value, and he does not hesitate to sacrifice the former for the latter. In fact, the individual often feels his freedom to be a burden and wants to divest himself of it for the sake of his higher realization. Tagore has beautifully depicted this in one of his sermons in *Santiniketan*.[11]

The Kaṭhopaniṣad's approach to the problem of salvation

As I have already pointed out, the peculiarity of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* is that it has developed side by side the two types of values, the values of individual realization and the cosmic values. It has done this in such a way that the former are always in tune with the latter. The highest cosmic value is the Puruṣa. The realization of this value by the individual constitutes his highest value,

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[11] See the sermon *Samāje Mukti* in *Santiniketan*, Fourth Series. The poet says there, 'If I say that man wants emancipation, I shall be telling a lie. Much more than emancipation, man wants bondage. He is crying for the 'privilege of being in bondage to that which will give him unlimited bondage.'

and is called salvation When the individual fully realizes the Purusa then he becomes emancipated This realization is through knowledge namely, the knowledge of absolute non-duality (*neha nānāsti kincana*) This knowledge may and does supervene upon Karma In fact, in Naciketas' own case, this knowledge was imparted to him after instruction was given to him concerning the most essential of all Karmas, that is to say, the setting up of the Naciketas fire But it has no direct connection with Karma Karma acts as a preparation for this knowledge, but cannot in any sense be said to be the cause of it Their respective positions in relation to salvation have been very clearly shown in *Īsa* 9 and 11

> अन्धं तम प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
> ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्याया रता ॥
>
> विद्या चाविद्या च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
> अविद्यया मृत्यु तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥

"Into blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they, as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone He who knows that as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality"—Sri Aurobindo's Translation

Although salvation is to be obtained through knowledge, this does not mean that Karma is of no use, for it removes the obstacles and prepares the ground for the emergence of knowledge. As Dr. N. K. Brahma has remarked,[12] 'we find that the Jñānavādins are unanimous in holding that Karma is of immense value so far as it helps to remove the obstacles that lie in the way of attaining transcendental wisdom (Jñana).' The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* joins its voice to that of these Jñānavādins who insist upon a previous training in Karma for all who aspire to the Supreme Knowledge which alone will finally release them from bondage.

Sri Krishna Prem in his book *The Yoga of the Kaṭhopaniṣad* speaks of the successive transmutations through which an individual has to pass before he attains final salvation. A most necessary transmutation in his view is that through the worship of the Naciketas fire. I am prepared to accept this view, though in my opinion, the most important transmutation is through the knowledge of Ātman. The advantage of calling the different stages transmutations is that it points directly to the fact that each stage leaves a permanent mark upon the individual's nature, so that the new light which he receives penetrates the whole of his

[12] *Vide Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana*, p. 175.

being. This transmutation is as necessary for individual evolution as it is for cosmic evolution, and that is why Sri Aurobindo has made it one of the basic principles of his theory of evolution.

But whether we call it transmutation or not, the fact remains that the individual's nature must undergo a fundamental change through the practice of the right karma before it can become fit for final salvation through knowledge.

Kramamukti and Sadyomukti

As I have already said, the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* mentions both kinds of salvation, the Kramamukti or salvation by gradual stages, that is, through passage from one *loka* to another until Brahmaloka is reached, when the journey comes to an and, and the Sadyomukti or immediate salvation which takes place through knowledge. Both these kinds of salvation are mentioned in *Kaṭh.* 2. 3. 4, which I have before quoted.. It runs as follows:

इह चेदशकद्बोद्धुं प्राक् शरीरस्य विस्रसः ।
ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते ॥

It has been interpreted by different scholars in different ways. I will first give the meaning of this verse as Śaṅkara understands it. He adds the words '*bandhanāt mucyate*' to the first line in

order to complete its sense. The first line then means 'If a person succeeds in obtaining this knowledge of Brahman before the dissolution of this body, then he becomes emancipated' He then takes '*tataḥ*' in the second line to mean '*anavabodhāt*' ('if this is not understood'), and interprets the second line as follows: 'In case this knowledge does not arise before the dissolution of the body, then the person has to pass from one world to another, seeking different bodies.' It is true, as Sri Krishna Prem points out, that the construction is somewhat artificial, but there can be no doubt that this is the correct interpretation of the verse. For the contrast is undoubtedly between Jīvanmukti, or emancipation in this life through the knowledge of Brahman, and Kramamukti, or emancipation by gradual stages, involving a passage from one world to another till the highest world, Brahmaloka, is reached, when the journey comes to an end. That the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* looks upon Jīvanmukti as the highest form of salvation appears very clearly from 2.3.14 and 15, to which we shall come presently. The artificiality of Śaṅkara's construction may be removed if we add the particle '*na*' before '*aśakat*' (as Max Müller has done). The meaning of the verse then would

be: 'If a man does not obtain this knowledge of Brahman before the dissolution of the body, then he passes from world to world, it being understood that if he *does* obtain this knowledge, then he becomes emancipated.' The meaning thus would be the same as in Śaṅkara's interpretation. Any other interpretation would destroy the whole meaning. R. E. Hume, for example, who on the whole has given us a very reliable translation of the Upaniṣads, has miserably failed here. He translates this verse as follows: 'If one has been able to perceive (Him) here on earth before the dissolution of the body, according to that (knowledge) he becomes fitted for embodiment in the world-creations. In a footnote to this translation he says, 'At best the stanza contradicts the general theory that perception of the Ātman produces release from reincarnation immediately after death,' and then he finds fault with Śaṅkara and Max Müller for giving a different interpretation of this verse. He forgets that if the object of this verse is to contradict the theory of Jīvanmukti, how can this same Upaniṣad at the end of the same section of the same chapter so clearly support it? Moreover, what evidence is there to show that the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* preaches the theory of different

above occurs first in *Br.* 4 4 7 Indeed, the main purport of Yājñavalkya's instruction to King Janaka, as given in the third and fourth chapters of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* was to impress upon him the great truth that is embodied in the conception of Jivanmukti. For Yājñavalkya Jīvanmukti and the knowledge of Brahman are practically synonymous terms Those famous words of his in *Br* 4 4 6

योऽकामो निष्काम आप्तकाम
आत्मकामो न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति ।
ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति ।

(Of him who is without desires, who is free from desires, the objects of whose desire have been attained, and to whom all objects of desire are but the Self—the organs do not depart. Being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman—Swami Madhavananda's translation) indicate this very clearly It is also stated in very clear terms in *Muṇḍ* 3. 2 9. 'Verily, he who knows that supreme Brahman becomes Brahman, or rather more correctly, he is already Brahman' (*Sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati.*)

But though there can be no doubt that the doctrine of Jīvanmukti is seen clearly in the other Upaniṣads, yet the merit of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* lies in

the fact that it separates the Jīvanmuktivāda from the Kramamuktivāda more sharply than the former. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, for example, immediately after 4. 4. 6: and 4. 4. 7, where the doctrine of Jīvanmukti is distinctly indicated, there occurs 4. 4. 8, which runs as follows:

अणुः पन्था विततः पुराणो
मा स्पृष्टोऽनुवित्तो मयैव ।
तेन धीरा अपियन्ति ब्रह्मविदः
स्वर्गं लोकमित ऊर्ध्वं विमुक्ताः ।

(The ancient narrow path that stretches far away has been touched by me, has been found by me. By it the wise, the knowers of Brahman, go up hence to the heavenly world, released—R. E. Hume's translation.)

There is great confusion here. The knowers of Brahman, who are in the preceding verses declared to be immediately released, are here described as proceeding by the Devayāna to the heavenly world. In other words, for them also Kramamukti is prescribed. The inconsistency is so glaring that Śaṅkara in his commentary on this verse is forced to say, "'Heavenly world' generally means heaven, the abode of the gods, but here from the context it means liberation." This is virtually an admission that this verse is not

consistent with the previous ones. The same confusion we notice in the next verse also, where the knower of Brahman (*brahmavit*) is placed in the same category with the doer of good deeds (*puṇyakṛt*). Even if we regard *puṇyakṛt* as an adjective of *brahmavit* the position is not much improved since it is not clear what the significance of this epithet is, for surely it does not add to the glory of a knower of Brahman by saying that he is a doer of good deeds.

The *Kathopaniṣad*, however, clearly separates the two kinds of salvation. It discusses Krama-mukti in its narrative part and finds it wanting. It never therefore goes back to this standpoint, and where it has later to refer to it, as in 2. 3. 4, it clearly differentiates the two standpoints and leaves no room for doubt as to which standpoint it adopts. And as if this was not enough, it states as its last word the truth of Jivanmukti and proclaims it solemnly as its final message.

There are many difficulties in connection with Jivanmuktivada. The main difficulty is in explaining the persistence of the body even after liberation. Various theories have been propounded for this purpose. According to one theory, knowledge is capable of extinguishing the accumulated Karma (*sañcita karma*) but is powerless

to remove the Karmas that have already borne fruit (*prarabdhakarma*). Such Karmas can only end after they have exhausted themselves. *Ch.* 6. 14. 2 speaks in the same strain. According to another theory, ignorance has two aspects, a veiling aspect (*āvaraṇa*) and a projective aspect (*vikṣepa*). Knowledge destroys the former, but the latter remains even after knowledge is attained. A very full discussion of these theories and of the difficulties inherent in Jīvanmuktivāda is found in Dr. N. K. Brahma's book *Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana*, Chapter X. Dr. Brahma has given also his own solution of these difficulties. It is found at p. 197 of his book and is as follows: 'The centre of individual consciousness (*jīvachaitanya*) which had been so long maintaining the body through a conscious identification with it, now having been consciously identified with the universal consciousness (*brahmachaitanya*) ceases to be responsible for its maintenance as an individual (because its individuality has ceased), and delegates, as it were, the functions to the universal consciousness; or more strictly speaking, the body, finding no individual centre as its sustainer, delegates itself to the universal consciousness which is the common and universal sustainer of all things. So long as cosmic purposes require its sustenance, the

body of the *Jīvanmukta* is preserved, but as soon as the cosmic purpose has been achieved, it no longer remains'

This solution is undoubtedly far better than the other ones, for it is true that even when the body ceases to fulfil any purpose of the individual (after his identification with Brahman) it may continue to fulfil some cosmic purpose Śankara in his commentary on *Brahma Sutra* 3 3. 32 mentions the cases of Apāntaratamas, Vaśistha, Bhṛgu, Sanatkumāra and others who, although they had obtained emancipation through knowledge, not only had to continue in their bodies even after emancipation, but had to take rebirth for the sake of cosmic purposes

From the strictly logical point of view, this is undoubtedly an excellent solution But to my mind the true solution is to be found in axiological rather than in logical grounds Values cannot be opposed by what is merely existent, they can only be opposed by other values The false coin is opposed to the genuine coin as a value and not as an existent So far as existence is concerned, both the false coin and the true coin have existence The body as a mere existence, therefore, cannot stand in the way of the realization of values It is quite otherwise, however, with desires Desires

cause an attachment to lower values and thereby disturb the relative scale of values. Under their influence the lower appears to be the higher value and the higher the lower. It is for this reason that it is very necessary that they should be completely removed. This is why the text of our Upaniṣad first says, "when all the desires of the heart are completely removed", as a condition precedent to the attainment of *mokṣa*. This is also the reason why the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* describes the liberated man as *akāmayamāna*. The body may remain; there is no harm in its persistence, so long as it persists merely as an existence without causing any desires. Not only is its existence not a hindrance, but it is even necessary for the realization of cosmic values, as the body of Apāntaratamas was necessary for cosmic purposes, and therefore that sage had to take rebirth as Vyāsa for the sake of the propagation of Vedic knowledge.

Thus far we can go under the guidance of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. It gives us as its last word the message of emancipation in this life. But this message has a meaning for the individual only. It has no meaning for the world at large. It has no cosmic significance.

Can we not, however, give a cosmic

significance to it? One way in which this has been done is by saying that when one soul is liberated, all souls will be liberated (*eka muktau sarva muktih*). This view, in fact, has been held by some Vedantists who argue that as Avidya is one, the removal of it from one soul will mean its removal from all souls. But then the inevitable conclusion will be that no soul has yet been liberated, for it is quite obvious that all souls have not been liberated. And yet it is the universal belief of our sages that some souls have been liberated.

To my mind the solution of this difficulty lies in admitting that both kinds of liberation are possible. There is, of course, the individual liberation which results from the removal of the individual Avidya. But in addition there is a cosmic liberation through the removal of the cosmic Avidya. This liberation has yet to take place.

is just this Soul, this Immortal, this Brahman, this All"[14] and could find a perfect reciprocity between the universe and all created beings, resting upon a common bond, namely, the indwelling, shining, immortal Person, had too noble a conception of the destiny of the world to believe that it would remain for ever in darkness

When cosmic liberation takes place, there will be no further need for individual liberation, for all individuals will *ipso facto* be liberated, as there will be a complete removal of all ignorance The question of individual liberation only arises so long as there is no cosmic liberation, that is, so long as the world process goes on through ignorance The words '*atra brahma samaśnute*' carry with them the prophecy not only of salvation for the individual human soul, but also of salvation for the whole of mankind and for the whole world The *Kathopaniṣad* stops with the message of individual salvation, but it has thrown out sufficient hints by which we can clearly see that cosmic salvation is not only possible but also inevitable For it has shown clearly that neither the body nor the presence of the world with its physical conditions is a hindrance to the realization of salvation by the individual By parity of

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[14] *Br* 2 5 1 I have given R E Hume's translation

reasoning, we may and must conclude that if these conditions are no hindrance to individual salvation, they cannot be a hindrance to cosmic salvation also

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPTION** OF THE ABSOLUTE

I

The aspect of Buddhism which I want to deal with in this paper is one which brings out the cultural continuity of Buddhism with the rest of Indian thought. This is its Absolutism which it shares with the other schools of Indian philosophy. Unfortunately the aspect of Buddhism which has been most .stressed in popular manuals is its phenomenalism, relativism or negativism, but its other aspect, its Absolutism, has not received as much attention as it deserves. But if Buddhism is phenomenalism, so far as its view of the world is concerned, it is no less Absolutism, so far as its deeper view, that is to say, its view of the nature of the Buddha or of Nirvāna is concerned.

This fact is of considerable importance from the standpoint of the development of Indian philosophy, for if the earlier systems, such as the Sāṃkhya or the Vedānta, had each its Absolute,

** Reprinted from "The Vedanta Kesari," Aug. and Sept 1942.

it would have meant a break in the continuity of tradition if Buddhism had discarded all Absolutes. Ancient philosophy, whether in India or in Greece, had always stuck to the conception of the Absolute, and Buddhist philosophy was no exception. The conception of the Absolute no doubt was different in the different systems, and these differences are of great interest for the student of the history of philosophy.

Be that as it may, it is an undoubted fact that all Buddhistic schools had their conception of the Absolute, however phenomenalistic and relativistic they might be in their view of the world and its processes. In the schools of Hīnayāna the conception is more veiled than in those of Mahāyāna, but it exists all the same. The form in which it exists in the Hīnayāna is, indeed, from one point of view, of even greater interest than that in which we find it in the Mahāyāna. For, as we shall presently see, it affords a connecting link between the thought of India and that of ancient Greece.

In the Hīnayāna we have a very peculiar theory of reality. In the form in which we find it in the school of the Sarvāstivādins, everything that happens is credited with reality, but it is reality of a very peculiar nature, for there is nothing per-

manent about it, on the contrary, it is the very picture of impermanence and instability In the system of the Vaibhāsikas, which is a continuation of that of the Sarvastivādins, two types of reality are recognized, one phenomenal and impermanent and the other, eternal Both these types of reality are analysed into their elements, the former into seventy two compound realities, of which eleven are material compounds, one is mind, forty-six are mental compounds, and fourteen non-mental compounds. The eternal realities are similarly analyzed into three 'uncompounded (*asamskrta*) realities, namely, *Ākaśa* (Space), *Apratisamkhyā-nirodha* (unplanned destruction), which means merely the non perception of objects which, owing to the absence of necessary conditions cannot be perceived, as, for example, when attending to one object, other objects are left unnoticed, and *Pratisamkhyānirodha* (deliberate destruction) or Nirvāna, which is the final and eternal deliverance from bondage and is attained by following the noble eight-fold path as laid down in the Canon The elements of the phenomenal and impermanent are also divided into the past, the present and the future, the past and the future being conceived to be as real as the present As for the eternal realities, leaving aside *Apratisa-*

mkhyanirodha which, as Keith points out is of relatively small importance, we have two absolute realities, namely, Space and Nirvana

Stcherbatsky considers the nature of Nirvana, as conceived by the Vaibhasikas, to be 'very similar to the reality of the Samkhya's undiffer entiated matter (Prakṛti), it is eternal, absolute, death' (*The Buddhist Conception of Nirvana*, pp 27 28) He then goes on arguing that the Nir vāna of the Vaibhasikas is nothing else than Mattes "The state of Nirvāna, as imagined by the Vaibha sikas," he continues, "affords some points of simi larity with that state of the universe which modern science imagines will exist when all energies will be worked out, they will exist, since energy itself (sc *dharmasvabhava*) is eternal, but they will not work A condition in which all energies (*samskaras*) are extinct cannot be spiritual Of course, simple materialism, goes under the name of *ucchedavada*, against which Buddha is reported to have made an emphatic protest But simple materialism in India, as elsewhere, means Nirvana at every death (*dehocchedo moksah*) without retri bution for one's deeds in future life The com plicated system of worlds imagined by the Buddha, through which the elements composing indivi dual existences are gradually, one after another,

reduced to a state of quiescence and extinction, until in final Nirvāṇa all are extinct—is nothing but the realization of the moral law. The worlds are 'produced' by karma, which corresponds to a conception of evolution going on under the influence of an accumulation of moral merit. Simple materialism leaves *no room for the working of this law.* But neither does, according to Buddha, an eternal spiritual principle leave room for it. The moral law conducts through a very long process of evolution the living world into a state of final quiescence where there is no life, but something lifeless, inanimate. In this sense the Vaibhāṣika outlook resembles the materialism of modern science." (*Ibid*, pp. 28-29).

This view, we think, is extremely wrong. It is due, we believe, to a misunderstanding of the words '*yasmin sati cetaso vimokṣo bhavati*' which the Vaibhāṣikas use to describe Nirvāṇa. These words do not mean, as supposed by Stcherbatsky, *passing into an inanimate material condition.* The more natural interpretation is that they refer to passing into a condition different from ordinary consciousness. There is no suggestion here of inanimateness or materiality. The example of the lamp which the Vaibhāṣika gives makes this perfectly clear. The Vaibhāṣika is supposed to

have said in reply to the Sautrantika's objection that what is a mere extinction cannot be envisaged as an Ens "Your interpretation of the words "extinction of desire," as meaning extinct desire, is wrong The right interpretation is the following one That thing in which desire is extinct is called extinction of desire It can then be asserted that when that ultimate entity which is called Nirvana is present, it means that every desire and consciousness are extinct (at final Nirvana) The extinction of the light of a lamp is a mere example And even this example must be understood as an illustration of the idea that consciousness is quite extinct in something that continues to exist " (See Stcherbatsky's *Conception of Buddhist Nirvana Appendix*, p 191)

It is clear from this extract that what the Vaibhasika means by Nirvana is the fire that remains after the fuel is burnt out This, however, far from meaning inanimate matter, is an ancient symbol depicting a mystic reality which remains after all its phenomenal manifestations are exhausted We meet it in the Śvetasvatara Upanisad (6 19), where one of the descriptions of the Absolute is that it is like a fire the fuel of which is burnt out (*dagdhendhanamivanal m*) It is a

conception of the Absolute which is very similar to that of Heraclitus who pictured it as an Everlasting Fire. The extinguished fire illustrates the true nature of the fire even better than the blazing one. The Buddhist and Upaniṣadic conception of the extinguished fire as representing the Absolute Reality is even more mystical than the Heraclitean conception. It is a further carrying out of the idea which Heraclitus expressed in his cryptic phrases 'One out of all and all out of one' and 'The road up and down is one and the same' (For the meaning of these phrases, see Sri Aurobindo's *Heraclitus*, p. 21 *et seq* and p. 33). If Fire is the eternal principle at work in the evolution and as well as in the dissolution of the universe, if the manifest and the unmanifest processes are nothing but expressions of the same eternal Fire, then it is evident that even in what we call extinguished fire, the principle of the fire is not extinguished—in fact, it can never be extinguished—only its existence is not apparent to us. Extinguished fire, therefore, represents the true inward essence of fire, that which shines all the more brightly when its apparent manifestations disappear. Fire as the symbol of the Absolute is a characteristic feature of ancient Aryan thought, and Hīnāyana Buddhism,

in representing Nirvāna as extinguished fire, is simply following the old Aryan tradition. Stcherbatsky's view, therefore, that the Nirvāna of the Vaibhāsikas is nothing else than matter, is clearly mistaken.

The Sautrāntikas occupy a position midway between the position of the Vaibhāsikas and that of the Mahāyāna. Though they seem to insist that Nirvāṇa means only the end of the process of life, without there being any lifeless substance left as a residue, yet they do not deny Nirvāna, for, as Stcherbatsky says, 'there is no Buddhism without Nirvāna.' The later Sautrāntikas allied themselves with the Mahayanists, and thus we have hybrid schools, known as Sautrāntika-Yogācāras and Madhyamika-Sautrāntikas. It is not surprising, therefore, that in this doctrine of Nirvāna they adhered closely to the views of the Mahāyāna. Stcherbatsky mentions that from Tibetan sources we know they admitted the doctrine of Dharmakāya.

We see therefore that in the Hīnayāna schools. Nirvāṇa, far from meaning a lapse into the condition of matter, points, on the contrary, to a mystic Absolute whose nature is ineffable. But it is in the Mahāyāna schools that the idea of an ineffable Absolute is fully developed. The Mahāyānist

conception of the Absolute, as we find it in the Vijñānavāda or the Yogācāra school, is very clearly stated in Asvaghosa's work *Śraddhotpadaśāstra*, a translation of which (the original Sanskrit work is lost) has been made by Suzuki from the Chinese version of the work under the title *Awakening of Faith* The Absolute is called in this book Tathatā (Suchness) or Bhūtatathatā (Suchness of Being). It is an ineffable reality whose nature cannot be exactly described and which is called for this reason Suchness But although its nature cannot be defined by means of any language, we can, if we follow Aśvaghosa, say this much about it that it is the 'oneness of the totality of things (*dharma dhātu*), the great all including whole, the quintessence of the Doctrine' (*Awakening of Faith*, Suzuki's translation, pp. 55-56) Asvaghosa further characterizes it as follows "In the essence of suchness, there is neither anything which has to be excluded nor anything which has to be added" He notices a possible objection to this way of characterizing it, and therefore says "Now the question arises, 'If that be so, how can all beings conform to and have an insight into suchness?' The answer is: As soon as you understand that when the totality of existence is spoken of, or thought of, there is neither that which speaks

nor that which is spoken of, there is neither that which thinks nor that which is thought of, then you conform to suchness, and when your subjectivity is thus completely obliterated, it is said to have the insight. Again there is a twofold aspect in suchness if viewed from the point of view of its explicability. The first is trueness as negation (*śūnyatā*) in the sense that it is completely set apart from the attributes of all things unreal, that it is the real reality. The second is trueness as affirmation (*aśūnyatā*), in the sense that it contains infinite merits, that it is self-existent. And again, by trueness as negation we mean that in its metaphysical origin it has nothing to do with things defiled (*i.e.*, conditional), that it is free from all signs of distinction existing among phenomenal things, that it is independent of unreal, particularizing consciousness Thus we understand that suchness is neither that which is existence, nor that which is non-existence, nor that which is not at once existence and non-existence; that it is neither that which is unity, nor that which is plurality, nor that which is not at once unity and plurality." (*Ibid.* pp. 58-59).

These long quotations from Aśvaghoṣa show clearly how similar is his conception of Tathatā to the Vedāntic conception of Brahman. It is

impossible to characterize Tathata by any of our finite categories, existence, unity, plurality, etc It is therefore both existence and non-existence, it is both unity and plurality, and also neither unity nor plurality. This is also the way in which the Upanisads have characterized Brahman, for Brahman is described purely negatively as *aśabdam*, *asparśam*, *arūpam*, *avyayam* and also positively as *aṇoraṇīyān*, *mahato mahīyān* Brahman is further characterized as *yato vaco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*, thus showing that the simultaneous characterization of Brahman by negative and positive epithets is really due to the fact that its nature is inexpressible through language and unapproachable by thought

II

The nature of Tathatā being thus understood, the question arises How does the world of names and forms originate? To answer this question Aśvaghosa takes recourse to the conception of Ālayavijñāna or All Conserving Soul, which is the principle that is at the root of the world of appearances What, however, is this Ālayavijñāna and how is it related to Tathatā? Aśvaghosa's answer is as follows: "In the one soul we may distinguish two aspects The one is the

soul as suchness, the other is the soul as birth-and-death. Each in itself constitutes all things, and both are so closely interrelated that one cannot be separated from the other.' He then goes on saying, "The soul as birth-and-death (*saṃsāra*) comes forth (as the law of causation) from the Tathāgata's womb (Tathāgatagarbha). But the immortal (suchness) and the mortal (*i.e.*, birth-and-death) coincide with each other. Though they are not identical, they are not a duality. Thus when the absolute soul assumes a relative aspect by its self-affirmation it is called the All-Conserving Mind (Ālayavijñāna) (*Ibid*, pp. 60-61).

There is an apparent inconsistency in these two passages, for the soul as birth-and-death (Ālayavijñāna) is in the first paragraph called an aspect of Tathatā, while in the second it is described as a creation of the latter. But the contradiction is only apparent, for the second passage makes it quite clear that the creator and the created are here looked upon as identical. The latter, in fact, is called the self-affirmation of the former, thus reminding one of the Hegelian conception of the Absolute Idea manifesting itself through the world of history and nature through its self-differentiation.

The Ālayavijñāna is the principle of evolu-

tion, the principle of the genesis of the world of experience with its innumerable variety and complexity. It should be observed, however, that the Ālayavijñāna by itself is not capable of generating the complex world of experience. It is only when it is stirred (or, as it is frequently called by Aśvaghoṣa, *perfumed*) by Ignorance that the multiple world of our experience with its sin and suffering arises. There is thus no primordial evil, and consequently the path to Nirvāṇa is not closed. The stirring up of the world-process by the action of Ignorance upon the Ālayavijñāna is compared in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra to the stirring up of waves on the surface of the sea by the wind in the following beautiful lines :

> तरङ्गा ह्युदधेर्यद्वत्पवनप्रत्ययोदिताः
> नृत्यमानाः प्रवर्तन्ते व्युच्छेदश्च न विद्यते ।
> आलयौघस्तथा नित्य विषयपवनेरितः
> चित्रैस्तरंगविज्ञानैर्नृत्यमानः प्रवर्तते ॥

(*Bunjiu Nanjio's Edition*, 1923, pp. 271-272)

We thus see that the Ālayavijñāna performs a function somewhat similar to that of Prakṛti in the Sāṃkhya philosophy, but it differs from the latter in two important respects. Firstly, it is not a noumenal principle as Prakṛti is, but

Bunjiu Nanjio's 1923 edition, pp. 77-78) show that there was sufficient cause for thinking that there was considerable similarity between the two doctrines. The explanation given as to why the doctrine of the Tathāgatagarbha is introduced, viz., that it is done for the sake of removing the horror which the uninitiated feel for *nairātmyavāda* (बालाना नैरात्म्यसंत्रासपदविवर्जितार्थम्) is not likely to convince anybody.

We have so far examined only the Yogācāra conception of the Absolute, but what we have said applies also with certain modifications to the Mādhyamika view. The main change which we notice when we pass to the Mādhyamika view is that it does away with the Ālayavijñāna. But the other parts of the Yogācāra philosophy, namely, the principle of Suchness, the conception of the Tathāgatagarbha and of the Dharmakāya are retained, although their meaning undergoes a change, on account of the change in the conception of reality.

The new conception which the Mādhyamika introduces is that the real is that which possesses self-existence (*svabhāva*), which is not produced by causes (*akṛtaka*), which is not dependent upon anything else (*paratra nirapekṣa*). In this sense all the objects perceived by our senses or imagined

and thought by the mind must be declared to be non-real, for they are all governed by the law of causality (*pratītya-samutpāda*). Being so governed, they are all interdependent, and hence unreal. But there is no question here of any void or absolute nothingness. What is asserted is merely that all objects perceived or thought or imagined are devoid of any independent reality, and that, consequently, they can only have relative reality. Indeed, as Stcherbatsky has been at great pains to prove, (*Vide* Chapter XIV of his book *The Buddhist Conception of Nirvāṇa*) the śūnyavāda of the Mādhyamika does not mean any doctrine of void or nothingness but simply a doctrine of relativity. His doctrine of relativity, indeed, follows from his interpretation of the principle of *pratītya-samutpāda* which, as given by Candrakīrti, is as follows: *hetupratyayāpekṣā-bhāvānāmutpādaḥ pratītyasamutpādārthaḥ*. From this it follows that all things exist as relative to one another, and that consequently, there is no independent existence (*svabhāva*) for anything.

The relativity of the Mādhyamikās is, however, a cloak for a deeper kind of Absolutism than that which is found in the earlier, that is, Hīnāyāna Buddhism. Its object is to dethrone logic or reason, because it is condemned to eternal relativity, and to enthrone intuition as the

sole means of knowing the Absolute The Madhyamika is more sweeping in his condemnation of pluralism than the Vijñanavadin, and makes short work of the Hinayanist ultimate elements of sense data An absolute monism thus results with a thorough going relativism in the phenomenal domain The destructive criticism of the categories of phenomenal existence which we find in Nagarjuna, the founder of the Madhyamika school, somewhat resembles the criticism of the categories of phenomenal existence, such as Cause, Substance, etc, which we find in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* or Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics* But there is this important difference between Bradley and Taylor on the one hand and Nagārjuna on the other that unlike the former, Nagarjuna does not recognize grades of reality in phenomenal existence, the whole of it being condemned as relative

The central conception of Madhyamika philosophy is, however, not relativity but Absolutism The relativity of phenomenal existence is in fact only expounded in order to pave the way for a thorough going Absolutism As Stcherbatsky says (*The Buddhist Conception of Nirvana*, p 47) " He (Nagarjuna) extols the principle of Relativity and destroys through it every

plurality, in order to clear up the ground and establish on it the unique, undefinable (*anirvaca-nīya*) Essence of Being, the One-without a-Second)"

There is one more point which we would like to mention in connection with the Mādhyamika view of the Absolute It is the famous saying of Nāgarjuna :

"संसारस्यच निर्वाणात् किञ्चिन्नास्ति विशेषणम्
ननिर्वाणस्यच ससारात् किञ्चिदस्ति विशेषणम्"

The monistic character of his philosophy is nowhere more evident than in this saying Nirvāna or the Absolute is present everywhere It is not something which stands above the errors, the sins, the weaknesses of the world of phenomenal existence All these characteristics of the phenomenal world are, when viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, nothing but the Absolute or Nirvana. Nāgārjuna in this way brings Nirvāna into contact with our everyday life There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that Nirvāna is the monopoly of the anchorite It is, on the contrary, the common heritage of mankind It is this catholicity which is, indeed, the most *distinguishing feature of the Madhyamika philo*sophy and links it closely with the catholicity

of the Upanisads This is also otherwise evident from the general tendency of the teaching of the Mahāyāna, which enjoins the seeking, not of individual salvation but of salvation for the whole world Its object, therefore, is to break all barriers that divide man from man, class from class and race from race, and unite the whole of mankind, nay the whole universe, under the guiding conception of Nirvana

It is rather unfortunate that most European scholars have missed the positive character of the Madhyamika philosophy and have characterized it as nihilism. There are, of course, some exceptions, one of the most notable being Stcherbatsky Japanese scholars, on the contrary, have emphasized the Absolutist character of this philosophy Berriedale Keith goes so far as to suggest that the Absolutist interpretation of this philosophy by Suzuki is due to the influence of Tāntrika philosophy upon him The negative element of Nāgārjuna's philosophy consists only in this, that he rejects the claim of reason and logic to comprehend the nature of the Absolute But if a philosophy is to be condemned as nihilistic on this ground, then we shall have to call the philosophy of Śankara also nihilistic, for he also did not believe that reason and logic were com

petent to give a knowledge of the Absolute. And if we apply this test to our present-day philosophy, which philosopher of the first rank will escape the charge of nihilism? At any rate, Bradley and Bergson will come under it.

We conclude, therefore, that Buddhism, whether in the schools of the Hīnayāna or in those of the Mahāyāna, always held fast, like the Upanisads, to the conception of the Absolute. There is, in fact, a continuity of thought between the Upanisads and Buddhist philosophy, and if Śaṅkara is to be called a disguised Buddhist, we may with equal justice call Aśvaghosa and Nāgārjuna disguised Vedāntists.

SELF-EFFORT OR GRACE? **

अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्
आत्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम् ।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको
धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥

Kaṭhopaniṣad, 1-2-20.

(Smaller than the small, greater than the great is the Ātman that dwells in the secret heart of beings. He who is free from desire, by tranquility of the senses beholds that Greatness of the Ātman (and becomes) freed from sorrow.—*Sri Krishna Prem's Translation.*

So runs a famous verse of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. In the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* this verse was copied, like many other verses of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, with some—but very significant—changes. The last line was changed into धातुः प्रसादान्महिमानमीशम् ।

The change apparently was slight. It related only to two words, *dhātuprasādāt* and *ātmānaḥ*, and yet how fundamental it was! It completely altered the meaning of this line and introduced a new idea which was not present in the earlier Upaniṣad.

** Reprinted from "The Vedanta Kesari" May, 1944.

This new idea is the idea of grace. *Dhātuḥ-prasādāt* may be translated into English as 'by the grace of the Creator.' The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* knows nothing of this.[1] It believes in the power of the individual by his own exertions to obtain salvation. What the individual requires for this is *dhātuprasāda*, that is, tranquility of the senses.[2] If he has this, then he does not require anything else for obtaining

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[1] It may be said here that the line "यमैवेष वृणुते तेन लभ्य:" in Kath. 1.2.23 speaks of Divine grace, and indeed, some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. But there is no reason why we should accept this interpretation and introduce an idea totally foreign to this Upaniṣad, when, as Śaṅkara shows, the line can very well be interpreted without this. See Krishna Prem's *The Yoga of the Kathopaniṣad*, pp. 107-108. For Muṇḍ. Up. 3.2.3, where Kaṭh. 1.2.23 is repeated, we have to adopt the same interpretation. Here also, we cannot say that there is any mention of grace, for immediately after this verse, there occurs the definite declaration in the next verse, "नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्य :" (The Self is not attainable by the weak) which makes salvation a matter for individual effort. So again, in Mund. 3.1.5, Ātman is said to be obtainable by truth, by austerity (*tapas*), by knowledge and by chastity (*brahmacarya*), but no mention is made of grace. This is also the case with Muṇḍ 3.2.8 and 9. From all these considerations it appears that it will be wrong to see in Kaṭh, 1. 2. 23 any enunciation of the principle of grace.

[2] Śaṅkara interprets the word in this sense. Hume points out that the word *prasāda* is used in the sense of tranquillity in Maitrī. 6.20 and 6.24. He also points out the use of the word *jñāna-prasāda* in the sense of 'the peace of knowledge' in Muṇd. 3.1.8, and also shows that the word is used in this sense also in the *Bhagavadgītā*, though the other meaning of *prasāda*, namely grace, is also found there. (See *Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 350, footnote).

salvation Kath 2, 3, 14 and 15 also speak in the same strain

Here, then, are two distinct points of view presented to us The one says that salvation is attainable through self exertion, the other says that it can be obtained only through Divine Grace Which of these are we to choose?

This conflict runs through the whole of our culture Whatever may be the case in the early Vedic age, there can be no doubt that in the later Vedic age and that of the earlier Upanisads, man became intoxicated with a new consciousness of his power, and this led him to believe that he could obtain salvation through his own exertions alone Deeper spiritual realization, however, showed him that this was not possible, and the pendulum swung to the other extreme This is what we find in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, where we have the first clear presentation of the doctrine of grace

A reconciliation of these two conflicting standpoints was urgently required, and this was one of the tasks which the Gītā set before itself On the one hand, the general drift of its teaching is to make man conscious of his high destiny and his incumbent duty to fulfil it, removing from his mind all traces of egoism and sentimentality

which paralyse his will; on the other, it equally emphatically declares that without Divine grace salvation is impossible. Thus, while its attitude is one of uncompromising opposition to all forms of passivity and do-nothing-ism, it proclaims as its final message: 'Abandoning all other principles, take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver you from all sin; do not grieve.' (Gītā, xviii 66).

The Gītā not only says in a general way that Divine grace is an indispensable condition of emancipation, but it also shows (xviii. 14-16) by an analysis of voluntary action, that there is always an indeterminate element in it which cannot be ignored through excess of self-consciousness. Every action, whether good or bad, is conditioned by five factors, namely, the body (अधिष्ठान), the doer (कर्ता), the various instruments (करणंच पृथग्विधम्), the many kinds of effort (विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा:) and lastly, fate (दैव). *To think that the agent* is the sole factor in action is the height of folly. Not only is it a great folly, but it is a serious moral delinquency. It is, in fact, as the Gītā shows in the sixteenth chapter, one of the characteristics of the man with the Āsurika nature (xvi. 13-15).

Fate or *daiva* is the element in a man's action over which he has no control. Its presence shows that man is not completely his own master, and

that there is a power above him which directs his actions. This, however, does not mean a negation of man's freedom, but only a restriction of it. Subject to that restriction, man enjoys freedom. I cannot do better here than quote what I have said in the fourth essay: "Let us face the question squarely. What exactly is meant when it is claimed that human beings are free? Is it meant that they enjoy absolute freedom even when they are limited, particular, individual beings? That is, of course, ridiculous, for it involves a contradiction in terms. All that can be claimed is that these finite individuals must be given a chance of being other than they are and of acting otherwise than they do, that is, of being other than mere finite, individual, particular beings and of acting otherwise than in a way contrary to the objective moral order. In other words, what can be claimed is that every finite individual must have freedom to improve himself, to rise above his limitations and ultimately to be one with God Himself. This freedom no one can assert that the Gītā denies. The words of verse 32 of the ninth chapter are explicit on this point: 'Everybody who takes refuge in me attains the supreme condition.' Nobody is doomed for ever . . . There is no coercion on the part of

God to tie down any individual to his or her particular lot for ever."

The Gītā's beautiful reconciliation of the principles of grace and self-exertion is a model *for all time of how an active virile attitude* can be combined with one of complete surrender to God. It shows how wrong it is to set up the disjunction: Either grace or self-exertion. This disjunction has been in fact one of the main causes of spiritual decline in the East as well as in the West. In our country, with the rise of the Bhakti schools, the principle of grace became the dominant note of our spiritual life. But in the enthusiasm for this principle, it was soon forgotten that grace could only work on a basis of self-activity. The result was that that beautiful harmony between these principles which was the distinguishing feature of the Gītā, was lost sight of. Self-exertion came to be deprecated, and this was a very unfortunate thing from the standpoint of spiritual progress.

In the West, too, this distinction has proved equally disastrous for spiritual life. Because the West feels to-day that grace is opposed to the principle of self-reliance and encourages a kind of intellectual and moral idleness, therefore, it wants to banish it completely from its scheme of

things. In the Middle Ages, on the contrary, the West believed mainly in grace and had very little faith in man's own efforts, and this led to Church rule, Papacy and other forms of authoritarianism, which were equally fatal to the growth of spiritual life. The West always goes from one extreme to another, and the medieval age with its implicit faith in grace has been succeeded by the modern age which rejects grace altogether. This sort of oscillation from one extreme to another will go on until this disjunction is completely discarded and an attempt made to build spiritual life on the basis of a conjunction of grace and self-exertion. How this is possible, we now proceed to show.

Grace supplies the essential transcendent element, without which evolution would be a Maypole dance round and round the same immobile stagnancy. If the world is to be lifted out of its present rut, it must be hooked on to something higher than itself. Grace supplies this element, this 'something higher than itself.' It is another name for the descent of the Divine Light into the world. Without such a descent the evolution of the world to a higher status is unthinkable. It is absurd to suggest that the world can cure itself. It cannot; it can only be cured by

Such an aspiration brings into play all the faculties of one's soul It cannot be obtained by mere submission to authority The Gītā says (iv 34) "तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया" ("Know this by submissiveness, questioning and service") Submission is only one of the ways, but it is not the sole way to spiritual realization It must be followed by the other two, the way of reflection and the way of service Submission helps only to check the growth of egoism, but egoism will return with a thousand fold virulence if the gods to whom one submits prove, on examination by reason, to be false gods The scepticism that will then result will be infinitely more dangerous than one which results from the mere absence of faith Lastly, the two ways of submission and reflection must be consummated by active service of truth, by complete dedication of oneself to the pursuit of truth It is only when this triple process is completed, that one obtains knowledge which is stable, which is not in danger of being lost at the first touch of reflection This is why in the next verse (iv 35) the Gītā says

यज्ज्ञात्वानपुनर्मोहमेव यास्यसि पाण्डव

("There will result that knowledge, O Pandava, which is no longer in danger of lapsing into ignorance") *Then only will the foundations of*

knowledge be truly laid. The third of these processes, what the Gītā calls *sevā*, the consecration of the whole of one's being to the service of truth, is what may be called Surrender in the truest sense of the word. Mere submissiveness is not surrender, for it may be of the pre-reflexional, sentimental nature, and may vanish at the first touch of reason. True surrender, as Amiel has said in his *Journal Intime*, is *mâle résignation* 'manly resignation,' the quality of manliness consisting in the acceptance by the whole of one's being (and not only by the emotional part of it) of that to which one resigns oneself, and a readiness to live for and die for it (as opposed to a mere passive acceptance of it). In such surrender there is a perfect blending of grace and self-effort.

What I wish to point out to-day[3], on this happy occasion of the anniversary of the foundation of *The Vedanta Kesari*, is that the two great spirits whose message this magazine has been proclaiming to the world for the last thirty years—I mean Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda—always looked upon this combination of grace and self-exertion as the most essential requirement of spiritual life.

[3]This essay was written on the occasion of the thirteeth anniversary of the foundation of *The Vedanta Kesari*.

Sri Ramkrishna, with his intense faith in grace, yet symbolised in his own life and in his teaching the great truth that grace can only be won through self-effort. Thus, in answer to the question of a devotee, "Sir, we have heard that you have seen God So please make us also see Him. How can one get intimate knowledge of the Lord?" Sri Ramkrishna said, "Everything depends upon the will of the Lord Perseverance is necessary for God-vision. If you merely sit on the shore of a lake and say, "There are fishes in the lake," will you get any fish? Go and get the things necessary for fishing; get a rod and line and bait, and throw some food into the water to entice them. Then from the deep water the fish will rise and come near you when you can see and hook them. You wish me to show you God while you sit quietly by, without making the least effort! You want me to set the curd, to churn the butter and hold it to your mouth. You ask me to catch the fish and put it in your hands How unreasonable is your demand!"[3] The nature of the self-effort required for winning grace he made clear, while expounding the gist of Śri Gaurāṅga's cult, in the following words: "This faith insists that man should at all times try to cultivate three things—

[3] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, p 210.

delight in the name of the Lord, loving sympathy for all living beings, and service to devotees....... With the knowledge that the whole universe is the household of the Lord, one should show pity to all creatures." "Uttering the last words, "pity to creatures" in a rather abrupt fashion, the Master went into *samādhi*. Sometime after—returning to a semi-conscious state—the Master exclaimed, "Pity to creatures! Pity to creatures! Sirrah you, who are lower than even a worm, how dare you speak of showing pity to creatures! Who are you to show pity to them? No, no, it is not pity to creatures, but service to them in the consciousness that they are verily God Himself."[4]

This is the origin of that famous doctrine of service of Daridranārāyaṇa, that is, of God incarnate in His creatures, which is the practical form which the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna has taken and which is the motto of that great religious organization associated with his name, and which is known all over the world as the Ramakrishna Mission."

Swami Vivekananda also felt that religious life demanded the union of grace and self-effort. In his lecture on *What is Religion*, he showed how these two principles could and must be united.

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[4] *Ibid*, p. 260.

"'The Upanisads,' he said, 'have declared: Arise! Awake! And stop not until the goal is reached. We will then certainly cross the path, sharp as it is, like the razor, and long and distant and difficult though it be. Man becomes the master of gods and demons. No one is to blame for our miseries but ourselves.' After showing in this way the imperative need of self effort, the Swami proceeded to show the equally imperative need of grace. 'Do you think,' he continued, 'that there is only a dark cup of poison if man goes to look for nectar? The nectar is there and is for everyman who strives to reach it. The Lord Himself tells us: "Give up all these paths and struggles. Do thou take refuge in Me. I will take thee to the other shore, be not afraid." We hear that from all the Scriptures of the world that come to us. The same voice teaches us to say, "Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven," for "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." It is difficult, all very difficult. I say to myself, "This moment I will take refuge in Thee, O Lord, unto Thy love I will sacrifice all, and on Thine altar I will place all that is good and

In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy also there is a beautiful blending of these two principles. Divine Grace in the form of Divine Descent is at the root of the whole process of Evolution. The process of Evolution has not reached its highest stage yet; there are still higher levels of it which have not yet emerged. The emergence of these higher stages is conditional upon the descent of the Divine Force in higher and higher forms. Man has a great destiny before him. He has fulfilled only a very small part of it. He is not to remain for ever mere man. He has a glorious future before him, for he is to become Superman or Divine Man. But that he may do so, it is necessary first and foremost that the Divine Principle of Supermind should descend into the world. Without the descent of this Principle, which is a matter entirely of Divine Grace, man cannot by his own exertions alone raise himself to the status of Superman. But even if the Divine Principle of Supermind were to descend into the world, it would not effect the desired transformation of man into Superman, unless man was in a position to receive it. Here we see the necessity of self-exertion, of an intense effort on the part of man to render himself fit for the reception of the higher

light when it chooses to descend. Man's self-exertion, therefore, if not the positive condition, is yet at least the negative condition of his transformation into the Superman. If he adopted merely a passive attitude, if there was not in him an intense aspiration after the higher light, then the Divine Force might knock at his door and yet finding him unprepared to receive it, might go back. Man, therefore, must *deserve* to receive Divine Grace before it can descend into him.

To sum up: Grace and self-exertion are two aspects of the same reality. That reality is the Divine Force descending into the world to make it what it is. Evolution is nothing but the obverse side of the process which we call creation. If creation means the involution of the Spirit in mind, life and matter, evolution must mean the return of the Spirit, through matter, life and mind, unto itself. We may therefore call it the homesickness of the Spirit. Effort on the part of the individual to improve himself, to rise to a higher status of himself, is a manifestation of this homesickness. It is therefore implied in the very idea of evolution. It takes the form of an aspiration on the part of the individual after a higher status, that is, a higher realization of the Spirit than what he has already obtained. To talk of evolution and yet not to

recognize this aspiration, this phenomenon of self-effort, would be an absurdity But the individual cannot by his aspiration *create* a new status for himself. He can only render himself worthy of it. The actual creation, the raising of the individual to a higher status, can only be effected by the Divine Force Itself. What is true of the individual is true also of the whole world. The world cannot be raised to a higher status, the evolution of the world cannot rise to a higher stage, unless there is a descent of the Divine Force in a higher form. This descent is what we call Grace. While it is true that the individual cannot by his own effort force the Divine Grace to descend, it is equally true that the intense effort of the individual to make himself worthy of it is itself due to the operation of the same principle which makes the descent of the Divine Grace inevitable. Thus at each stage of evolution the two processes must go together. There must be an intense craving on the part of the individual for a higher light from the Divine Source, and an actual descent, on the part of that Source, in a higher form. Thus, world evolution goes on, rising step by step to higher and higher stages, each stage conditioning higher activity on the part of individual beings to improve themselves,

to make themselves worthy of receiving higher light, and being itself conditioned by higher and higher forms of Divine Descent, grace meeting self-effort and self-effort continuously being crowned by grace. Thus धातुप्रसाद and धातुःप्रसाद continually pass into each other

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INDEX OF NAMES AND TOPICS

The figures indicate the pages on which the names occur or the topics are discussed

abhyasa, 87
Absolute, the 1, 23, 185, 235, 236, 241, 242, 243, 250 253, 254, 255
—as the Concrete Universal (Hegel), 1 2
—realization of, both in its unity and its multiplicity, 23
—nature of, incapable of being grasped by the logic of concept, 185
—Buddhist philosophy has also its Absolute, 236
—conception of, in the Hina yana, 241 42
—do, in the Mahayana, 243, et seq
Absolute Idea, the—Hegel's conception of, compared with the conception of tathata, 246
absolutism, 235, 251, 252
acaryas 143
Acyuta, 67
adharma, 181, 182
adhisthana, 166, 259
adhyatmavidya, 8, 134
adhyatmayoga, 81
advaita philosophy, 34
See also under *advaita Vedanta*
advaita Vedanta, 20, 30
ahimsa, 33, 72, 134
aja, 43
Ajataśatru, 28
akaśa, 237
akamayamana, 231
akartraka, 250
Aksara, 42, 94, 208, 213, 214,
—logically the highest principle but axiologically not complete, 214
—of the Gita, equated with the Avyakta of the K Up, 208
See also under Aksara Brahman
Aksara Brahman, 41, 42, 43, 44 47, 50, 59, 82, 83, 93, 94 95, 157 58
——not the same as Purusottama, 42 43, 93 94, 157 58
—Sri Aurobindo's view on its distinction from Purusottama, quoted, 94
—the late Lokamanya Tilak's identification of it with Purusottama criticised, 42 43, 93 94, 157 58
aksara prakrti, 42
Ālayavaijñana, 245, 246, 247, 250

—nature of, 246 48
—its relation to and distinction from, the Prakṛti of the Samkhya, 247 48
All Conserving Soul or Mind See under *Ālayavijñana*
Amiel, 265
amurta, 180n
anadi, 43
ānanda, 81
anilayana 182
anirvacaniya, 253
anrta, 182
anstoss, 134
—nature of, which releases the teaching of the Gita, 136 38
antarjamin, 211
apana, 95
Apantaratamas, 230 231
apara prakṛti, 45 46, 49, 150
—its distinction from para prakṛti 45
apratisamkhyanirodha 237
Appearance and Reality (Bradley) 252
Aristotle, 7
—his 'theorising God", 196n
Arjuna, 47, 51, 52, 53n 55, 67, 68, 71, 74, 135, 157, 138, 154, 167, 170 174
—*is he a normal or a* super normal person ?, 133 34
asambhuti and sambhuti Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of, 24 See also under Sri Aurobindo
asaṃskṛta, 237
ascent of the soul, 81 et seq, 150, 152
aspiration, 270, 271
aśunyata, 244
asura qualities, 48n, 61, 62, 63, 95
—and daiva qualities See under *daiva qualities*
Atharva Veda, 4, 38
atman vaisvanara, 212
'atra brahma samaśnute", 225, 233
—these words envisage both individual and cosmic salvation 233
Aurobindo, Sri, 20, 21, 22, 24, 33, 50, 54, 64, 94, 95, 97, 103, 152, 157, 160, 162 163, 185, 206, 218, 219, 241, 269
—his views on the nature of Avatara in the Gita, 59 60, 160 61
—do on the fourfold social order in the Gita, 169, 171
—do on the interpretation of the words vidyā and avidya, as also of sambhūti and asambhuti in the Iś Up, 21 22, 24 25
—relation between grace and self effort in his philosophy, 269
autonomy, Kant's conception of, as opposed to heteronomy, 74, 106, 107
Avatara, 59, 76, 160
—Sri Aurobindo's views on the conception of, in the Gita See under *Sri Aurobindo*
avidyā, 22, 23, 232
—individual and cosmic, 232

—and vidyā in the Īś. Up. See under *Sri Aurobindo*
avijñāna, 182.
Avyakta (in the Gītā), 83, 84, 88, 159.
—resolution of the conflict between it and the world of multiplicity, 83-84.
—lower and higher, the former being identical with Mūlaprakṛti and the latter with Akṣara Brahman, 42.
—worship of, pronounced very difficult and not worth pursuing, 159.
Avyakta
(in the Kath. Up.), 200, 201, 205, 208, 212.
—it cannot be identified either with the Puruṣa or with Prakṛti, 201-5.
—and the Consciousness-Force of Sri Aurobindo, 205-6
—equated with the Akṣara of the Gītā, 208.
Awakening of Faith (Aśvaghoṣa: Suzuki's translation), 243, 244.
Banjiu Nanjio, 247, 249.
becoming, 100.
being, 183.
being determinate, 100.
Belvalkar, Dr. S. K., 196n. 204, 223n.
Bergson, Henri, 185, 255.
Bhagavadgītā, The, 8, 28, 29, 30, 36, 37, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 87, 88, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 123n, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 204, 208, 209, 210, 214, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 265
—a yogaśāstra, 131.
—does not advocate renunciation of action, but renunciation of the fruits of action, 87, 139, 145.
—does not believe in piecemeal realization, 132.
—deals with the realization of a normal human being and not that of a supernormal being, 133.
—makes no difference between the will and the intellect, 123n
—does not believe in knowledge divorced from practice, 57.
—does not favour any particular yoga to the exclusion of others, 141, 143-47.
—does not give a moral justification for the caste system, 64.
—difference between its

dialectic and that of Hegel 100
——essentially a book of *sadhana*, 131
—its analysis of action, 166, 259
—its cosmic standpoint of karma See under *cosmic significance of karma*
—its catholicity, 135
—its conception of God, 44, *85 85*, *89 91*, *124 25*, 155, 159
See also under Aksara Brahman and Purusottama
—*its conception of* freedom See under *freedom*
—its conception of yoga See under *yoga*
—*its conception of* svabhava and svadharma See under *svabhava* and *svadharma*
—its double standpoint in the last six chapters, 154
—its triumphant optimism, 128
—its scale of values, compared with that of the Kath Up, 208 10
—problem of conflict in, See under *conflict*
—its conception of Avatāra See under *Avatāra*
—its conception of Viśvarūpa See under *Viśva rupa*
—its distinction between parā and apara prakṛti See under *parā* and *apara prakṛti*
—its distinction between daiva and āsura qualities See under these qualities
—*its concluding verse puts* its whole teaching in a nutshell, 174
For other topics discussed in the Bhagavadagitā, see under those topics
bhakti, 28, 30, 44, 86, 131
bhaktimat, 116, 140
Bhisma, *167*
Bhṛgu, 230
bhūtatathata, 243
bodhi, 249
Bradley, F H, *65*, *252*, *255*
Brahma, Dr N K, 218, 229
—on the difficulties inherent in jivanmuktivada, 229-230
brahmabhūta, 119
brahmabhuya, 119, 172
brahmacarya, 257
Brāhman, 27, 28, 44, 45 ,.. 181, 182, 184, 195n, 205 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 233, 244, 245, 248, 249
—Aksara (Immutable) See under Aksara Brahman
—Nirguna, 214
brahmana, 65, 135, 169
brahmanirvāna, 119
brahmani sthita, 119
Brahma Sutras, 104n, 205, 230
"brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati", (Mund) 175, 227
brahmavidyā, 25, 27, 28
brahmavit, 228
brahmayogayuktātmā, 119

Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad, 27, 175, 183, 194n, 212, 213, 226, 227, 231
Buddha, The, 10, 60, 138, 235, 238, 239
Buddhahood, 59, 160
buddhi, 102, 200, 201
Buddhism, 5, 9, 17, 235, 236, 241, 242, 255
—its cultural continuity with the rest of Indian thought, 235
Buddhist conception of the Absolute, 235 et seq
Buddhist conception of Nirvana, The (Stcherbatsky), 238, 240, 251, 252
Buddhist schools, 236
Buddhist philosophy See under *Buddhism*
Caird, John, 126, 127
—his view that Spinoza is not a pantheist, 126 127
Candrakirti, 251
Canon, The (Buddhist), 237
carama śloka, 53n
Chandogya Upanisad, 13, 14, 27, 41, 175, 182, 183, 194n
character, determination by, See under *self determination*
chatri nyaya, 196n
Christ, 59
Christhood, 59 160, 161
Christianity, 248
Church rule, 262
Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, 268n
Concept of Dukkha in Indian Philosophy (Jaideva Singh), 17n
Concrete God, 94
Concrete Person, 207
Concrete Universal Self, 212
conflict—idea of, in the Gita, 68 et seq
—may be broadly classed under three heads, 70
—horizontal and vertical, difference between the two, 79, 80
—vertical, 81
—individual, 92
—cosmic, 92, 95
—between the cosmic and the supracosmic, 93
—between the daiva and asura qualities, 61 62, 95 96
—between the standpoints of self-effort and grace, 258
—how this last conflict is resolved in the Gita, 258-60
Correspondence of Spinoza, 130
cosmic egg, 203
cosmic form of God, 52, 54, 56, 152, 153, See also under Viśva rupa
cosmic realization, 55
cosmic salvation, (liberation), 2,2 34
cosmic self, 155
cosmic significance of karma, in the Gita, 36 et seq
crisis, nature of, depicted in the *Gita*, 136 38
—why it is called a yoga, 138
See also under *anxiety*
"dagdhendhanam ivanalam", 240 See also under *fire*
daiva (divine), 163

—deistic, theistic and pantheistic conceptions of how they are combined in the Gītā, 159
—descent of. See under *descent*
God and Evil (Joad), 19
God realization, 148, 150, 153
—yogas dealing with, 148, 153
Goethe, 3
grace (of God), 18, 19, 256, 257, 258, 265
——its relation to self-effort, 256 et seq
—and self effort two aspects of the same reality, 270 72
—blending of the two in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, 269 70
—relation between the two, as conceived by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, 265 68
Greater Self, 66 170
Green, T H, 40, 65, 66, 99, 111, 112, 113, 116
—his combination of the standpoint of Kant with that of Hegel, 112
—his conception of freedom. See under *freedom*
—his conception of society. See under *Greater Self*
guhyatama, 43
guhyatamam śastram, 43
gunas, the, 15, 58, 92, 98, 156, 156n, 163, 166
—conception of, in the Gita, different from that of the orthodox Saṃkhya, 92 156n
gunatrayavibhāgayoga, 155
Hartmann, Nikolai 191, 192, 193
—on the difference between axiological and causal dependence, 191
—symbolical representation of do, 192
—refuses to acknowledge any highest value, 192 3
—fundamental difference between his view of values and that of the Upaniṣads, 193
Hegel, 1, 100, 107, 112
—resemblance between his conception of the Absolute Idea and the doctrine of tathata, 246
—comparison between his dialectic and that of the Gita. See under *Bhagavadgita*
Hegelian logic, 214
Heraclitus, 26, 241
—his doctrine of Becoming 179
—his conception of Everlasting Fire, compared with the Buddhist and Upanisadic conception of extinguished fire, 241
Heraclitus (Sri Aurobindo), 241
heterodox systems, 5
heteronomy, Kant's conception of, as opposed to autonomy. See under *autonomy*

higher Avyakta See under *Avyakta*
Higher Consciousness, 33
History of Indian Philosophy (Dr S N Dasgupta), 43, 160, 166
History of Indian Philosophy Vol II The Creative Period (Belvalkar and Ranade), 196n
Hymns from the Rgveda (Peterson), 38
Hyslop, 105, 106, 115
incarnation, 60
indwelling principle, God as, See under *God*
Imperishable Brahman See under *Aksara Brahman*
Indian Philosophy—looks upon Reality as Value, 2-5, 8
—difference between its standpoint and that of Western philosophy, 6 8
—is it pessimistic ? 12 et seq
—does it preach asceticism ? 20 et seq
—place of intuition in, 8 9
—knows no distinction between theory and practice, 6
—nor any conflict between religion and philosophy, 12-13
—is eminently living, 32 35
—conflict between intuition and reason in, 9
Infinite Self, 153
intuition, 8-9
—contrast between the Indian and the Western attitude towards, 8 9 See also under *Indian Philosophy*
Īsā Upanisad, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 184, 197, 198
—does not favour asceticism 20 21
—Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the words vidya and avidyā and sambhūti and asambhūti in this Upanisad See under *Sri Aurobindo*
Isha Upanishad (Sri Aurobindo), 25
Introduction to the Bhagavad gita (D S Sharma), 72, 73, 131
Jainism, 5
Janaka, 226
Jayadratha, 167
Jiva, relation of, to God, 65, 210
Jivabhuta, 45, 150, 162
jivanmukti, 220, 221, 224, 225, 226, 227
—is the highest form of salvation in the Katha Upanisad, 220 24
—is conceived in the other Upaniṣads, 226
—is mixed up with krama mukti in the Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad, 227
Jivanmuktivada—difficulties in, 229
—solution of these difficulties proposed by Dr N K Brahma, 229 30
—author's solution of them from the point of view of axiology, 230 31

jñāna, 28, 30, 75, 102
—one of the ways of union with God, 28
—its reconciliation with karma and bhakti in the Gita, 30
—reconciliation of jñana and karma through karma yoga, 75
jñana atman, 201
jñanakarmasannyasayoga, 78
jñanavibhagayoga, why it is so called 77, 104n
Joad, C E M., 19
Kant, 48n, 74, 107, 112, 113, 116, 117, 142, 155
—his conception of freedom, called rational freedom by Sidgwick, 48n
—his distinction between heteronomy and autonomy See under autonomy
—gives, unlike the Gitā, only formal characteristics of the moral law, 142
—two kinds of freedom in, 115 116 See also under *freedom*
Kantian antinomies, 185
Kant's Theory of Ethics (Abbott) 108
karma, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 36, 39, 40, 42, 47, 48, 64, 75
—cosmic significance of See under *cosmic significance of karma*
—place of karma in spiritual life, 64
—reconciliation of karma with asceticism, 25, 28
—reconciliation of karma with jñana and bhakti in the Gita See under *jñana*
—source of karma in Aksara Brahman, 82
—reconciliation between karma, on the one hand, and sannyasa and tyaga, on the other hand, 102
—attitude of the Katna Upaniṣad towards karma, 197 98
—karma treated as a preparation for higher knowledge in this Upanisad, 217
—sañcita, 229
—prarabdha, 229
karmasannyasa, 144
karmayoga—transformation of karma into karmayoga in the Gita, 29, 147
—what the Gita means by saying that it and sannyāsa both lead to salvation, 145, 146
—the late Lokmanya Tilak's view that it is the only yoga preached in the Gita, dissented, from 143
Katha Upanisad, the, 26, 158, 175, 176, 177, 179, 181, 186, 192, 194, 196, 199, 200, 201, 205, 207, 208, 211, 213, 215, 216, 218, 219, 220, 222, 223n, 224, 225n, 226, 227, 228 231, 233, 256, 257, 257n, 258
—looks upon karma as a condition precedent to higher knowledge, 26, 217

—its comparison of the universe to an *aśvattha tree*, resembling that found in the Gita but differing from it in some details, 158, 209
—its unique position among the Upanisads, 175
—blends realization and philosophy more perfectly than other Upanisads, 175
—its structure that of a pyramid, 176
—its standpoint that of the philosophy of values, its distinction between śreyas and preyas, which is a distinction between value and existence, 177 79
—its declaration that the *Ultimate Reality is not* accessible to conceptual logic, 182, 185-92
—its conception of two selves in man, comparison of this conception with a similar conception found in the Gitā and the Mundaka and Śvetaśvatara Upaniśads, 193-97
—criticism of the view held by Profs Belvalkar and Ranade, that it does not recognize the distinction between the higher and the lower self, 196n, 197n
—its *ladder of values* 200 et seq
—comparison of its ladder of values with the scale of values in the Gitā, 208
—two other scales of value mentioned in this Upanisad, 201 2
—its conception of mahat ātman, śānta atman and avyakta See under these respective heads
—the Purusa of this Upanisad equated with the Purusottama of the Gitā, 208 9
—its conception of Reality as beyond dharma and adharma, cause and effect, past, present and future, 181 85
—its Purusa is an axiological principle *and not a logical* category, 213 14
—its attitude towards salvation *for it salvation is* an axiological and not a logical necessity, 215 16
—its conception of values compared with that of Nikolai's Hartmann See under *Hartmann*
—knowledge of Naciketas fire as a prepration for higher knowledge, leading to salvation, 217
—its distinction between karmamukti and sadyomukti, 199, 219 See also under *kramamukti*, *sadyomukti* and *jivanmukti*
—does it preach only *individual* salvation or does it not also hint at cosmic salvation? 232 34
—its attitude towards grace, contrasted with that of the

Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad, 256-57.
—Kaṭh 1.2 10, inconsistency between the first two and the last two lines of this verse, it can only be removed if the verse is interpreted from the standpoint of reality as value, 187-92.
—Kath 1 2 23: does not speak of grace, 186, 257n
—Kaṭh. 1 3.2, Śaṅkara's interpretation of, makes a distinction between karmamukti and sadyo-karamamukti and sadyomukti, 198-99
Keith, A. B., 230, 254.
Kena Upaniṣad, 180, 206.
kingdom of ends, 180.
kramamukti—more sharply distinguished from sadyomukti in the Katha Upaniṣad than in the older Upaniṣads. See also under *Kathopaniṣad* and *jīvanmukti*.
Krishnahood, 59, 160, 161.
Krishna Prem, Sri, 69, 77, 104n, 131, 151, 155, 177n, 181, 189.
—his interpretation of the meaning of yoga in the Gita, 69, 131-32.
—do of Kath 1.2.10.
Kṛṣṇa (Lord), 44, 51, 52, 72, 76, 78, 85, 86, 97, 134, 152, 170.
kṣetra, 46, 56, 63, 89, 90, 154-55.
Nature of, 56, 89, 154-55.
—opposition between it and kṣetrajña, and how the opposition is to be overcome, 89-90
kṣetrajña, 46, 56, 57, 63, 71, 89, 90, 91, 154, 155.
—the knowledge of Puruṣa as kṣetrajña is not merely theoretical but also practical, 46-47, 57.
—the conception of God as kṣetrajña, 91.
—the self as kṣetrajña is a subject and not a substance, 155.
See also under *kṣetra*
ladder of values See under Katha Upaniṣad.
Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (Banjiu Nanjio's edition), 247, 249.
law of Reason, 109.
Laws (Plato), 158.
laya, 162.
Leibniz, 127.
Life Divine, The (Sri Aurbindo), 33, 270.
logical contradictions, 184.
—and values, 184-85.
logic of concept, 185, 192.
—its difference from the logic of value (or the logic of the real), 192.
logic of the Infinite Value, 185.
Logic of the Real (S. K. Maitra), 101.
Mackenzie, J. S., 113.
madhuvidyā, 211.
Mādhava, 186n.

Mādhyamika (philosophy), 250, 251, 253, 254.
—its central conception not relativity but absolutism, 252
—its conception of nirvāna, 253.
Mahābhārata, The, 146n
mahat ātman, 200, 202
Mahāyāna, 236, 242, 254
Mahāyānism, 248
Mahāyānist conception of the Absolute, 243 et seq
"*me priya*", *119* (Gītā)
Messiah, 263
Metaphysics of Morals (Kant), 108
Methods of Ethics (Sidgwick), 115n
Mill J. S. 107
miracle, 262, 263
Modern Review, *The*, 157
mokṣaśāstra, 47
morality, as conformity to law, contrasted with morality as realization of an end, 112
motive, 111, 112
—nature of, acc. to Green, *111-112*.
mūlaprakṛti, 42.
Müller, Max, 188, 189, 221

Mundaka Upaniṣad, 25, 186, 195n, 257n
Munsterberg, 7.
"My *station* and *its* duties"
—Bradley's conception of: comparison of it with the Gītā's conception of svabhāva and svadharma, 65, 66
Naciketas, 26, 27, 176, 181, *188*, *217*
Naciketas fire, 188, 189, 191, 194n, 195n, 197, 198 ,199, 217
—triple, different from the fivefold fire, 194n,
—as a bridge to higher realization, 198-99
Nagārjuna, 252, 253, 254
—his destructive criticism of the categories similar to that of Bradley or Taylor, 252
—monistic character of his *philosophy*, *253*
—his philosophy is not nihilism, 254
nairatmyavāda, *250*
"naisā tarkena matirāpaneyā", 185 (Kath)
Nārada, 5, 6
"nāyam ātmā balahinena labhyah", 257n (Mund)
"nedam yadidam upāsate", 206 (Kena)
"neha nānasti kincana", 217 (Kath)
"neti neti" (Br), 80, 206
nihilism, 254, 255
—European scholars' representation of Mādhyamika philosophy as nihilism, criticised, 254-55 See also under *Nāgārjuna*
nilayana, *182*.
nirguna Brahman See under Brahman.
nirukta, 182.

Nirvana, 10, 235, 237, 239, 240, 242, 253, 254
—Buddhist conception of, is Absolutist 235
Stcherbatsky's view on the Vaibhaṣika conception of, criticised, 239 40
niṣkriya, 93
nistraigunya, 63, 156
non attachment, 116 117, 139
—as a characteristic of freedom, 116
—importance of the principle of, in the Gita, 117
—as a formal characteristic of yoga, 139
North Col, 49, 51
objective rightness, contrasted with subjective rightness, 99
"one out of all and all out of one" (Heraclitus), 241
order of merit (in the Gita), distinguished from the order of difficulty, 87 88
orthodox systems, 5
Otto, Rudolf, 51, 52, 53
—the view of his (as well as Garbe's) on the distinction between ghora rupa and viśva rupa, criticised, 51 52
Papini, 62
parable of the chariot, 204, 205
paramam vacah, 50
para prakrti (in the Gita), 45, 46, 49, 150
—nature of, 45 46, 150
—distinguished from aparā prakṛti, 45 46
Parmenides (Plato), 158
Patañjali, 16, 69
personal causality, 114, 115
Peterson, 38
phenomenalism 235
philosophy—as the expression of the Absolute in man, 1
—as the Idea returning to Itself (Hegel), 1
—as moksasastra, 3
—no distinction between theoretical and practical, in Indian philosophy, 3
—contrast between the view points of Indian and Western, 6
—as love of knowledge, 6
—as darśana, 8, 10
Plato 7, 110, 116, 158, 178
—his conception of freedom See under *freedom*
—his view of the idea of good, compared with the Kath Up's conception of śreyas, 178
polyadic view of thought (in the Gita), distinguished from the triadic view of Hegel, 101
pradhana, 204, 205 See also under *prakrti*
pragmatism, 62
—of faith, 62
Prajapati, 203
prakṛti, 45, 56, 58n, 92, 156n, 204, 247, 248
—of the Gita different from the prakṛti of the Samkhya, being the prakṛti of God, 45
—lower and higher See under these heads

—the Avyakta of the Kath Up cannot be identified with it, 204
—its resemblance with, as well as difference from, the ālayavijñāna of Aśvaghosa, 247 48
prakṛti vikṛtis, 45
Praludien (Windelband), 177
pramāna patavah, 9
Prana, 95, 185
prārabdha karma 229
prasada, 257n
pratisamkhyanirodha, 237
pratitya samutpada, 17, 251
meaning of, 251
Pravahana Jaibali, 28
preyas, 177, 179
problem of descent, 90
Prolegomena to Ethics (Green) 40
Purusa, 37, 38, 46, 47, 58n, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 208, 215
—of the Purusa Sūkta in the Rgveda, 37, 38
—in the Gita, distinction between the ksara and the akṣara Purusa, 46
—in the Kath Up it is the highest value, 200, 201, and cannot be identified with the Avyakta, 202
—equation of the Purusa of the Kath Up with the Puruṣottama of the Gita, 208 9
—is an axiological principle and not a logical category, 214, 215
—The Eternal, 40
Purusa-Sūkta, The, 37, 38
Purusottama in the Gitā
—as the Supreme Spirit, 42
—higher than the Aksara Brahman, 43 44
—the highest principle, 46, 157
—richness and concreteness of, as contrasted with the abstract character of the Aksara Brahman, 59
—as the indwelling principle of the universe, 59, 65
—to Purusottama the proper attitude of man is one of surrender, 67
—nature of, 94-95
—equated with the Purusa of the Kath Up See under *Puruṣa*
Radhakrishnan, Sir S, 34
rajaguhya, 43, 83
rajasa, 98
rajasika, 62
Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Sri, 32, 265, 266, 267
—his views on the relation between self-effort and grace See under *grace*
Ranade, Prof R D, 196n, 204, 223n
Reality—as Value, 4, 7, 8
—as beyond dharma and adharma, cause and effect, past, present and future, 181-82
—as Existence, contrasted with Reality as Value, 7, 177 79
—second dimension of, 180

—his solution of the inconsistency in Kaṭh 1 2 10
—his interpretation of Kaṭh 1 3 2
—takes mahat ātman to mean Hiranyagarbha, 203.
—his view of the Avyakta *in his commentary on* Br Sut 1 4 1-7, 204-6
—as a disguised Buddhist, 255
—on the continuance of the body and the necessity of rebirth for cosmic purposes, 230
—his interpretation of dhātuprasāda, 257n
sannyāsa, 78, 79, 102, 146, 166
—conflict in the Gitā between sannyāsa and karmayoga and its reconciliation, 78 79
—different kinds of, according to the presence of the gunas, 102
—new definition of sannyāsa in Gitā, xviii 2
—distinction between sannyāsa and tyāga, 166
sannyāsamārga, 80
sannyāsayoga, 149
śānta ātman, 202
—views of Deussen and Sri Krishna Prem on, 202
—criticism of these views, 202
Śāntiniketara (Tagore), 216
sarvakarmaphalatyaga, 87, 88
sarvakṣetreṣu kṣetrajña, 56.
Sarvāstivādins, 236, 237.
śāstra, 97, 98, 99, 104n
—meaning of, in the Gitā, 104n
śāstravidhi, 99
Sastri, Dewan Bahadur K S, 142
sat, 181, 182
sattva, 92, 156
satya, 182
satyam = sa + ti + yam, 183.
= sat + ti + yam, 183.
= sat + tyam, 183
"satyasya satyam", (Bṛ), 180
"satyam jñānam anantam" (Taitt), 181
Sautrāntikas, 240, 242
Sautrantika-Yogācāras, 242
Saviour, 263
Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, 266n
scale of values
—three different ones given in the Kath Up., 201, compared with that in the Gita, 208
schicksal, 4
Schiller, F C S, 62
śebadhi, 187n
self-determination, 112, 114 15
—its distinction from determination by Reason, 112
self-effort, 256, 261, 262, 265, 271
—*and grace do not form a* disjunction, 261
—relation between the two, as viewed by the Gitā, 258 61
—do as conceived respectively by Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and

realization—of the individual self, 132, 148-49
—of the cosmic self, 132, 149-52
—complete self realization or God realization, 132, 153
Ṛgveda, 4, 37, 38, 203
Rickert, 7.
Rongbuk Basal Camp, 32, 33.
Roy, Raja Rammohan, 32, 33.
"ṛtam pivantau" (Kath Up.), 196n, 197n
ṛtapa, 196n
Ruler and Moral Governor of the Universe, 212
Saccidananda, 180.
Sacred Books of the East, 188.
sādhanā, of the Gītā, 131 et seq.
—the Gītā a book of sādhanā, See under *Bhagavadgītā*
sadyomukti, 189, 199, 219.
—and kramamukti, 199, 219, 219, et seq
See also under *salvation*.
śakti, 206
salvation—as the ultimate aim of Indian philosophy, 5.
—is an axiological and not a logical necessity, 215-16
—salvation by stages (krama mukti) and immediate salvation (sadyomukti or jīvanmukti) 219 et. seq See also under *jivanmukti*.
—both kinds of salvation indicated in Kath 2.3 4, 219-20.
—individual and cosmic, See under *Katha Upanisad* and *atra brahma samaśnute*
samatva, 139
Sāmaveda, 4, 38
sambhūti and asambhuti
—Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of See under *Sri Aurobindo*
Sāmkhya, the (philosophy), 6, 9, 29, 45, 156, 204, 205, 235, 247, 248
sāmkhya (in the Gita), 79, 144, 146, 147.
—meaning of, 79
—and yoga, reconciliation of the two through sāmkhya-yoga, 29, 147
—the Gītā's object in saying that sāmkhya and yoga are one and the same, 146 47
Sāmkhya Kārikā, 15
Sāmkhya-yoga, 29, 74, 142, 147, 165.
—positive end of, 142.
See also under *sāmkhya*.
sāmkhya yogin, 140
samskāra, 238
sāmyabuddhi, 47
Sanatkumāra, 4, 6, 230
sancita karma, 229
Sāndilyavidya, 211.
Sankara, 9, 104n, 180n, 186n, 187n, 190, 195n, 198, 203, 204, 205, 213, 230, 255, 257n
—his view of intuition and reason, 9
—his interpretation of Kath 1.2 23, 186n

—his solution of the inconsistency in Kaṭh 1 2 10
—his interpretation of Kaṭh 1 3 2
—takes mahat atman to mean Hiranyagarbha, 203
—his view of the Avyakta in his commentary on Br Sut 1 4 1 7, 204 6
—as a disguised Buddhist, 255
—on the continuance of the body and the necessity of rebirth for cosmic purposes, 230
—his interpretation of dhatuprasada, 257n
sannyasa 78, 79, 102, 146, 166
—conflict in the Gita between *sannyasa and karma yoga* and its reconciliation, 78 79
—different kinds of, according to the presence of the gunas, 102
—new definition of sannyasa in Gita, xviii 2
—distinction between sannyasa and tyaga, 166
sannyasamarga, 80
sannyasayoga, 149
śānta atman, 202
—*views of Deussen and Sri* Krishna Prem on, 202
—criticism of these views, 202
Śantiniketana (Tagore), 216
sarvakarmaphalatyaga, 87, 88
sarvakṣetreṣu kṣetrajña, 56
Sarvāstivādins, 236, 237
śastra, 97, 98, 99, 104n
—meaning of, in the Gita, 104n
śastravidhi, 99
Sastri, Dewan Bahadur K S, 142
sat, 181, 182
sattva, 92, 156
satya, 182
satyam = sa + ti + yam, 183
= sat + ti + yam, 183
= sat + tyam, 183
"satyasya satyam", (Bṛ), 180
"satyam jñanam anantam" (Taitt), 181
Sautrantikas, 240, 242
Sautrantika Yogacaras, 242
Saviour, 263
Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, 266n
scale of values
—three different ones given in the Kath Up, 201, compared with that in the Gita, 208
schicksal, 4
Schiller, F C S, 62
ś-badhi, 187n
self-determination, 112, 114 15
—its distinction from determination by Reason 112
self-effort, 256, 261, 262 265, 271
—and grace do not form a disjunction, 261
—relation between the two, as viewed by the Gita, 258 61
—do as conceived respectively by Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and

Sri Aurobindo See under *grace* self-exertion See under *self effort*
Sharma, D S, 72, 131, 134
shining immortal Person, 233
Sidgwick, Henry, 48n
Singh, Principal Jaideva, 17
Spengler, Oswald, 3
Spinoza, 48n, 107, 110, 111, 116, 125
—his definition of bondage, 111
—his conception of freedom See under *freedom*
—his reconciliation of the omnipotence of God with man's freedom, 125
Spinoza (John Caird), 127
Spirit, The, 270
spontaniety, 105
śraddhā, 62, 63, 97, 99, 164
—śraddha as the essential subjective condition of right action, 98, 164
—"yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah" ("a man is as his faith is"), 98, 164
—*three kinds of śraddhā*, and three types of men corresponding to these three kinds, 62 63, 97 98
—The Gita's pragmatism of faith, 62
See also under *faith*
śreyas See under *Kathopanisad* See also under *Plato* for the relation between śreyas and Plato's idea of good
Śrīdhara, 156
Stcherbatsky, 238, 239, 240, 242, 252, 254
—*his* view on Vaibhasika's *nirvāna*, criticised, 242
sthitam, 179n
sthitaprajña, 74, 116, 140
sub specie aeternitatis, 253
submission (submissiveness) distinction between it and surrender, 264 65
suchness, 243, 250
śūdra, 65, 169
śūnyata, 244
śūnyavāda, 251
Superman, 269
Supermind, 269
supercosmic Reality, 85, 86, 88, 90
supracosmic Source, 54, 81, 82 83, 86
surrender—as the proper attitude of man towards God, 84, 103
See also under *submission*
svabhava and svadharma (in the Gita)
—what they mean, 168 69
—the Gita's doctrine of *svabhava and svadharma* does not lend support to the *caste system*, 64-65, 168
—similarity of this doctrine of the *Gitā* with *Bradley's* doctrine of "My station and its duties" See under *My station and its duties*
svabhava—meaning of, in Buddhist philosophy, 251.
svabhāva niyatam karma, 66
svargya, 199

Svetāśvatara Upanisad, 240, 248.
—its conception of extinguished fire similar to the *Hīnayāna conception* of the Absolute, 240-41.
—unlike the Kath Up., it distinctly exhibits the doctrine of grace, 258.
"tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevyā (Gītā), 264.
Tagore, Rabindranath, 3, 34, 216, 216n.
—his interpretation of Maitreyī's saying, 3.
—his conception of the essential unity of man with God, 34.
—his statement that man often feels his freedom to be a burden, 216, 216n.
tamas, tāmasa, 98.
tāmasika man, 163.
Tāntrika philosophy, 254.
tathāgatagarbha, 246, 249, 250.
tathatā (bhūtatathatā), 243, 244, 245, 246.
—conception of, similar to the Vedānta conception of Brahman, 244-45.
Taylor, A, E., 252.
"tena tyktena bhunjithāḥ" (Īs. Up.).
—contains the essence of morality", 39.
Theaetetus (Plato), 179.
theophany, the great, 53n.
"the road up and down is one and the same" (Heraclitus), 24.
Thirteen Principal Upanisads (R. E. Hume,)257n.
Tilak, Balgangadhar, the late Lokamanya, 34, 42, 47, 76, 78, 80, 93, 104n, 145, 145n, 157.
—shows how karmayoga can furnish a philosophy of life, 34
—his view that akṣara in Gītā 15.8 refers to aksaraprakṛti, criticised, 42.
—stresses the fact that the Gītā being a mokṣaśātra, the knowledge valued by *it is not merely theoretical* knowledge but also practical, 47.
—his view that the Gītā only expounds the doctrine of karmayoga, criticised, 145.
—points out the wrong *interpretation* by the followers of the sannyāsamārga of Gīta vi. 3, 80.
—his *identification of Purusottama* with Akṣara Brahman criticised, 93, 157.
—his interpretation of the word *śāstra* in the Gītā, 104n.
transcendence, of God, 84, 85, 91.
transcendent and imman nt conceptions of God.
—*conflict between*, 89.
—are inseparable, 162.
transcendentalism, 160
trigunātīta, 116, 141, 175

—relation between the doctrine of tathagata garbha and the Vedanta, 249
See also under Advaita Vedañta
Vedanta Kesari, The, 265
velleity, 105, 115
"very dear to God" (Gita), 142 See also under "*me priya*"
vibhutiyoga, 151
vidya, 22, 178, 179
See under *Sri Aurobindo* and *If Up*
"vijñanam anandam brahma" (Br), 181
vijñanavada, 243, 249
viksepa, 229
Vivekananda, the late Swami, 32, 265, 267, 268
—his views on the relation between grace and self effort, 267 68
"vividhasca prthakcestah" (Gita), 166
Vyasa, 16, 231
yajña, 27, 28, 39, 40, 41, 78, 199
—creation as yajña of the Purusa, 38
—the yajña of the Purusa sets the standard for all human action, and thus the idea of sacrifice is at the root of the Hindu conception of karma, 38 39
—the Gitā is also true to this cosmic background of karma, 36 40
Yajna katha (R S Trivedi), 40
Yājñavalkya, 188, 189, 190, 191n
Yajurveda, 38
"*yamevaisa vrnute tena* labhyah" (Kath), 257n
—do these words speak of grace?, 257n.
"yayedam dhāryate jagat", (Gita), 150
yoga (in the Gita) 28, 29, 52, 69, 77, 80, 131, 132, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 153, 165
—meaning of, 28 29, 69, 131-32
—why Arjuna's crisis is called yoga, 138
—formal characteristics of, 139 41
—*material do*, 142 43
—*the Gita does not teach* any particular yoga to the exclusion of others, 143 45
—nor does it believe in any opposition between one yoga and another, 147
—first division of the yogas, 148 49
—second do 149 53
—third do 153 et seq
—the yogas mentioned in the earlier chapters of the Gita find their completion in the last chapter, 165
yoga and philosophy—close co operation of the two a characteristic of Indian thought, 176
yoga of knowledge, 82

triumphant message of hope (from God), 173
Trivedi, Ramendra Sundar, 37, 39, 40
—shows how an ethical principle can be derived from the yajña of the Purusa mentioned in the Rgveda, 39
two conditions for the uplift of the universe 174
two selves in man, 193 97
tyāga, 102, 166
Types of Ethical Theory (Martineau), 114n
ucchedavāda, 238
Uddalaka Āruni, 182, 211
"uddharedatmana atmanam" (Gita)
—*significance of these* words for the problem of freedom and as indicating the presence of two selves in man, 168, 195
Ultimat Reality, the, 182, 185, 186 207
—not accessible to logic, 185, 186
—is both Being and non Being, 182 83
—s a concrete Person, 207
Universal, The, Abstract and Concrete, 2
universal mathematics, 185
Upanisads, the, 14, 20, 25, 30, 160, 175, 176, 193 254
—give a reality status to the world and check the tendency towards escapism, 25, 30
—the conception of avatara does not find a place in them, 160
—difference between Hart mann s theory of values and that of the Upanisads, See under Hartmann
Urgestalt der Bhagavadgita (Otto), 53n
vac, 201
Vaibhasikas, 237, 238
vaiśvanara, 162
vaiśya, 65, 169
value—search for, the essen tial feature of Indian philosophy, 2 3
—Reality as Value the essential feature of the Kath, as well as the other Upanisads, 179 80
—scale of values in the Kath Upanisad See under *ladder of values*
—logic of value, compared with the logic of the categories, 185 See also under *Kathoparisad* and *Nikolai Hartmann*
Vasistha, 230
"Vasudeva is all" (Gitā), 153
Veda, 161
Vedas, the, 161
Vedanta, the, 161, 214, 248, 249
—unsystematised, contras ted with the later syste matised, 214
—Brahman of the Vedanta, compared with the Dharma kaya of Aśvaghosa See under *Dharmakaya*

—relation between the *doctrine* of *tathāgata garbha* and the Vedanta, 249
See also under Advaita Vedānta
Vedanta Kesari, The, 265
velleity, 105, 115
"very dear to God" (Gita), 142 See also under "*me priya*"
vibhutiyoga, 151
vidyā, 22, 178, 179
See under *Sri Aurobindo* and *Is Up*
"vijñānam ānandam brahma" (Bṛ), 181
vijñānavāda, 243, 249
vikṣepa, 229
Vivekananda, the late Swami, 32, 265, 267, 268
—his views on the relation between grace and self effort, 267-68
"vividhasca prthakcestah" (Gita), 166
Vyāsa, 16, 251
yajña, 27, 28, 39, 40, 41, 78, 199
—creation as yajña of the Purusa, 38
—the yajña of the Purusa sets the standard for all human action, and thus the idea of sacrifice is at the root of the Hindu conception of karma, 38 39
—the Gitā is also true to this cosmic background of karma, 36 40
Yajña katha (R S Trivedi), 40
Yājñavalkya, 188, 189, 190, 191n
Yajurveda, 38
"yamevaisa vṛnute tena labhyah" (Kaṭh), 257n
—do these words speak of grace?, 257n.
"yayedam dhāryate jagat", (Gitā), 150
yoga (in the Gitā) 28, 29, 52, 69, 77, 80, 131, 132, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 153, 165
—meaning of, 28 29, 69, 131 32
—why Arjuna's crisis is called yoga, 138
—formal characteristics of, 139 41
—material do, 142 43
—the Gita does not teach any particular yoga to the exclusion of others, 143 45
—nor does it believe in any opposition between one yoga and another, 147
—first division of the yogas, 148 49
—second do 149 53
—third do 153 et seq
—the yogas mentioned in the earlier chapters of the Gita find their completion in the last chapter, 165
yoga and philosophy—close co operation of the two a characteristic of Indian thought, 176
yoga of knowledge, 82

Yoga of the Bhagavadgita, The (Sri Krishna Prem), 131, 151n
Yoga of the Kathopanisad, The (Do), 177n, 181, 189, 202, 203, 218
Yoga Sutras, 15
Yogeśvara (Lord of yoga), 174
—combination with dhanurdhara necessary for the well being of the world, 174

Yuktatma, 119